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ABSTRACT

A handbook for University of Georgia graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) is presented that provides practical information about teaching for inexperienced GTAs as well as experienced teachers who seek new ideas. Attention is directed to: responsibilities of assistantships; relationships with faculty and with students; policies, procedures, and requirements; getting a assignment; conducting a classroom course; beginning the course; subject matter knowledge; organization and preparation; instructional delivery skills; instructional aids; lecturing; discussions; quiz sections and review sessions; teaching in science and language laboratories; test development; types of tests; test administration; term papers and projects; academic dishonesty; non-native teaching assistants; handicapped students; student-teacher conflicts; accusations of sexual harassment or prejudicial treatment; order in the classroom; evaluating student performance; reporting and posting grades; letters of recommendation; evaluating teacher performance; instructional development; and library instructional services. (SW)

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HANDBOOK FOR
GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Prepared Jointly by

The Office of Instructional Development

and

The Graduate School

Revised, 1987

Athens, Georgia

The University of Georgia
Graduate School
Athens, Georgia 30602
Tel. (404) 542-2925
Office of the Dean

June 1, 1987

TO NEW GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

I am happy that we can place this manual in your hands as you begin your teaching experience at The University of Georgia. The University is committed to fostering excellence at every level in its missions of teaching, research, and service. Your work with undergraduate students is very important to us in fulfilling the University's commitment to the State of Georgia, to our nation, and to the world of science and scholarship.

This is a practical manual. It tells you what situations to expect and how to deal with them. It cannot tell you everything, of course, and so it suggests where you can go to seek help. It also leaves much to your own initiative. As I read through it, I was reminded of my own years as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and of other years when Graduate Teaching Assistants came to me. I would like to have had a manual as helpful as this one.

The graduate deans of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools and of the national Council of Graduate Schools in the U. S. have a continuing interest in the role of Graduate Teaching Assistants in research universities, in their welfare, and in their professional development. By publishing this manual The University of Georgia is fulfilling one of its obligations to the regional and national councils of which it is a member. For helping the Graduate School to comply with this commitment, I am grateful to Drs. Ronald Simpson and William Jackson of the Office of Instructional Development for the effort they have made to write a practical and useful guide.

As a graduate student you are enrolled in the Graduate School, and you are responsible to your department and to us for your academic progress. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant, you are a member of the teaching staff of a department in one of the other schools or colleges, and your responsibility is to the department head and to the dean of the school or college that employs you. It may help if you think of your own studies as akin to the research assignment that your graduate professors have, and you will want to achieve that balance between research and teaching that they seek to maintain. I believe that this manual will help you to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

John Dowling

John Dowling
Alumni Foundation Distinguished
Professor of Romance Languages
and Dean of the Graduate School

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Office of Director

Dear Graduate Teaching Assistant:

Most of us on the faculty remember vividly our first teaching experience. For some our preparation consisted of receiving a copy of the textbook, being told when and where the class would meet, and getting a pat on the back as we were told "good luck." We hope that this document, along with the valuable assistance you will receive from your department, will help you have a smooth beginning.

Graduate teaching assistants at The University of Georgia deliver a substantial portion of instruction at the freshman and sophomore levels. This represents a significant contribution, both to the institution and to our students. This handbook was prepared with you and the important task you face in mind. We trust that you will find the material useful and that your growth and development as a teacher will be one of the highlights of your graduate program here at Georgia.

The intellectual, emotional and social development of countless students will be influenced by the quality of instruction you deliver while serving as a GTA. Everyone associated with the University appreciates this dedication and hard work. We wish you much success and ask that you call on our office if you need additional help.

Sincerely,

Ronald D. Simpson
Professor and Director

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA 164 PSYCHOLOGY BLDG ATHENS, GEORGIA 30602 (404) 542-1355

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As a graduate teaching assistant or "GTA" at The University of Georgia, you will fill a unique, dual role as graduate student and teacher. On the one hand, you will be utilizing the University's instructional services to further your own academic development. On the other hand, you will be providing a vital portion of those services through your own instructional activities. Although GTAs are sometimes employed to assist in upper-level undergraduate courses, the majority of assignments are for introductory or survey-level courses; therefore, you will probably be dealing primarily with freshman and sophomore students throughout your career as a teaching assistant.

Educational research has demonstrated that the freshman and sophomore years are especially important to the development of critical thinking ability and attitudes among college students. How undergraduates are taught and the care with which teachers attend to their educational needs and interests will often determine whether a new student's first few quarters are a stimulating period of intellectual growth or an unsettling and discouraging academic experience. As a GTA, you will come into contact with many undergraduate students; and your performance will be a critical element in the University's overall effort to make their educational experience as rewarding as possible. Of equal importance, your performance as a GTA will enrich your own educational experience and constitute a major addition to your

resume. For these reasons, The Univerity of Georgia is concerned that new teaching assistants become acquainted with their instructional responsibilities and develop teaching proficiencies as quickly and thoroughly as possible, while maintaining satisfactory progress toward their own degree objectives. This handbook is dedicated to that concern.

The Handbook

Purpose of the Handbook

This publication is intended to be a basic source of practical information about teaching for the inexperienced GTA and an additional resource for the experienced teacher who is seeking new ideas or increased insight into the function of teaching. It is written for the level of experience and background of the typical new GTA and is designed to help the inexperienced attain the self-confidence, resourcefulness, skills, and initiative needed to assure both quality instruction for students and a rewarding personal teaching experience.

Depending on your qualifications and your department's policies and needs, your teaching responsibilities may vary from assisting faculty members in such tasks as monitoring tests or maintaining laboratory supplies to primary responsibility for conducting a complete course, including evaluating student performance and assigning final grades. Consequently, the need for information about teaching will vary greatly among GTAs. Some may need to review only portions of this handbook. Others may find all the information useful, including the references for further reading. All GTAs are encouraged to read carefully

Chapter Six, "Special Teaching Situations." Chapter Four, "Teaching in the Laboratory Setting," should also be required reading for all GTAs assigned to laboratory instruction or supervision.

This handbook presents the relationship between student and teacher as an open, dynamic interaction which may be described as a partnership dedicated to the common goal of student learning. Heavy emphasis is placed on the responsibility of the teacher for the engineering of a quality learning environment. The centrality of the student, whether the ones you teach or yourself as a graduate student, is an essential characteristic of an effective educational endeavor. Your students deserve the best learning opportunity the University can provide--but, so do you. Their reason for enrolling at The University of Georgia is to learn, and so is yours; consequently, you are faced with a unique responsibility to maintain an equitable balance of your time and resourcefulness between your own graduate work and your responsibility to teaching.

Your supervisor, major professor, best friend, and/or this publication can give you encouragement and advice, but ultimately only you can balance and exercise your dual responsibilities. The use of this handbook, however, should expedite your comprehension of the general nature and scope of teaching and may help to prevent many of those disconcerting little surprises that the inexperienced teacher encounters. The handbook is not written in technical terms but contains common sense guidance and practical tips on teaching that you will need throughout your

assignment as a teaching assistant and later in your teaching career.

Organization and Content

The information is presented in eight chapters. The remainder of Chapter One contains a brief discussion of the nature of the teaching assistantship and references to common policies and procedures applicable to the assignment. Because policies and procedures are subject to frequent modification, most of the information in this chapter is general rather than specific; and, whenever possible, the reader is referred to the appropriate office, publication, or campus official for additional information. Likewise, readily available information included in other University publications such as the Student Handbook and Laboratory Safety Manual is not duplicated in detail.

Chapter Two deals with the problems of preparing to teach and contains some reminders and suggestions about how to cope with that big event, the first day of class. Chapter Three discusses effective teaching and reviews several teaching methods. Chapter Four is devoted to teaching in the laboratory setting. Chapter Five is concerned with evaluating student progress. Chapter Six includes a discussion of handling unique or difficult teaching situations. Chapter Seven examines the concluding of a course, and Chapter Eight contains a summary of the instructional support available at The University of Georgia.

As indicated above, this handbook was written primarily to address general problems of teaching which are common across the

schools and colleges of the University. Course content guidelines and many instructional policies are departmental responsibilities; therefore, the information in this publication is intended to supplement but not supplant, supercede, or replace department or University policies, procedures, or regulations.

In summary, this handbook is intended to help you obtain a better understanding of the situation in which you will be working, to provide information that may help you develop ideas and practices that will make your teaching more effective and rewarding, and to serve as a ready reference for additional sources of reliable information. To meet these objectives, it is recommended that the handbook be used in a loose-leaf binder to which relevant and supplementary materials may later be added. Ideally, it is a publication that you may rely upon at first, expand upon as you begin to develop and refine your own repertoire of teaching skills, and finally improve upon or challenge with your own experiences.

The Teaching Assistantship

Purposes of Assistantships

Graduate teaching assistantships fulfill two important purposes. They provide vital staff support for the University's educational mission, while simultaneously providing financial support and professional experience for outstanding graduate students. As a recipient of a teaching assistantship, you have assumed the responsibilities and will receive the benefits associated with a unique opportunity to learn while teaching others.

As a graduate student at The University of Georgia, you will receive some of the best instruction available in your field. As a student, you are still vulnerable to the stresses of student life and probably uniquely aware of the difference that a dedicated, enthusiastic teacher can make in a class and to students. As a teaching assistant, you are now in a position to use that knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness in your own instructional activities. Memories of the methods that inspired your undergraduate performance in your discipline should be a storehouse of ideas for inspiring interest among the students in your classes.

Each department has its own criteria for distributing assignments to GTAs, and your duties may range from assisting a faculty member in grading test papers or setting up laboratory exercises to full responsibility for teaching a course. Whatever the nature of your assignment, your performance as a GTA will affect the lives of many other students. Your comments on a test paper, the manner in which you respond to a request for

As a GTA you have assumed the responsibilities and will receive the benefits associated with a unique opportunity to learn while teaching others.

assistance, the way you announce a test or deliver a lecture--all the ways you interact with students--will have an influence on student attitudes and performance. Consequently, your role as a GTA is vital to the maintenance of the University's high standards for instruction.

Basic Responsibilities

It may help you to remember that as a graduate teaching assistant, your responsibility is to your department and to the academic dean of the undergraduate college that employs you. As a graduate student, your academic responsibilities are to your department or program and to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Obligations associated with your assistantship include a responsibility to the following: your faculty supervisor for timely and conscientious performance of assigned duties; your students for punctuality, careful preparation, and respect; and yourself for making adequate progress toward your degree. The great diversity of requirements among the various departments makes it impossible to establish a single set of performance criteria for all GTAs; therefore, specific details regarding your obligations should be obtained from your supervisor or department head. In the meantime, the following general observations may help to illuminate the nature of your basic responsibilities.

Whether assisting a professor in pre-class preparation, teaching a class, or fulfilling other assignments, GTAs are expected to be punctual, dependable, and professional. For instance, if you have sole responsibility for a class, you will be expected to arrive fully prepared and ready to begin on time, every time. This responsibility will require arriving early

enough to arrange lecture notes, sort any handouts or graded test papers for quick distribution, and/or set up and test any equipment in time to procure any required accessories or replacement parts before class time. In other words, you will be expected to set an example of punctuality and preparation for your students.

If for any reason you will not be able to perform assigned duties on schedule, you should notify your faculty supervisor or other designated official as soon as possible. Never cancel a class or make arrangements for someone else to substitute for you without your supervisor's prior approval. Notify your class ahead of time if you arrange to cancel a class so they can avoid unnecessary travel time and expense. (Fee-paying students have a right to a full quarter of instruction). You must adhere to established University and departmental policies and procedures regarding any changes in the schedule or location of classes.

Whatever the nature of the teaching assignment, all GTAs are also expected to act in a professional manner and to exercise basic courtesy and respect in all student-teacher interactions. Consequently, you will be expected to be available and ready to offer appropriate assistance to students at all scheduled office hours; to avoid ridicule, sarcasm, or other forms of inappropriate behavior; and otherwise to demonstrate proper respect for the students participating in your department's instructional program. You are accorded the same academic freedom as a regular faculty member, and you are obligated to exhibit the same responsibility in the exercise of that freedom. In summary, you are expected to project the professionalism and

academic ideals of the regular faculty and to perform your duties in full accordance with the statutes of the University and the directives of your department.

Time Management

Management of your time will be a major factor in the successful conduct of your dual role. You will be obligated to devote a specified number of hours to your teaching duties each week, and you will be required to register for a minimum number of credit hours of course work yourself each quarter. Conscientious time management will help prevent your being forced into the frustrating and discouraging position of having to choose between the role of graduate student and that of teacher. For instance, it may be commendable to challenge your class to produce twenty-page term papers; but careful grading of forty term papers in the last week of the quarter can be a major task--especially if you are having to work at a desk cluttered with the research notes for those unfinished chapters of your dissertation, which is due to be turned in the next week. Neither you nor your students can be treated fairly under these conditions; consequently, effective time management is essential to your success and to the success of your teaching and should be a top priority.

The best way to prevent the kind of problem described above is to initiate a workable plan for time management during the preliminary planning for a quarter and stick to it. Planning calendars are especially useful time management tools. Once the syllabus is prepared for the course, you should be able to mark with reasonable accuracy the dates you will be preparing or

grading tests, term papers, and final exams. With additional planning, you can also reserve the estimated time you will need for each job. Your supervisor or other teachers who have taught the course previously may be able to give you some advice; but it is generally advisable to be generous in estimating the time you will need for daily preparation, class time, and posted office hours, plus any special events, such as field trips. Once all these duties are blocked out on your calendar, if you consistently manage that time well, the rest of your calendar will be yours to devote to your own studies and to your personal life.

Block out the study time you will need for your own studies, noting on your calendar the dates that your own tests, term papers, seminar reports, dissertation drafts, and so forth will be due. Also, be sure to plan for any important personal commitments. It is wise to be generous in allotting your own personal and study time too. Next, scrutinize the calendar for time conflicts or work overloads and reconcile any conflicting situations to bring the whole into the confines of the time available. Once this process is complete, you will have a useful tool both for managing your time and monitoring your progress on a daily and weekly basis. A few minutes spent reviewing your calendar every day will be time well invested.

Even the best time management efforts can be undone by factors that may at first appear to be beyond the individual's control. Drop-in visitors can really interfere with your plans, and a few scattered telephone calls can disrupt an entire morning's productivity. Both of these problems are intensified

when the visitor or caller wants to "take a few minutes" or "catch up on old times." Also, while coffee breaks can be an excellent source of rejuvenation and social contact, they can also be real time wasters. Usually, problems of this nature are the result of the biggest time waster of all: the inability to say "no." It is possible to protect your time (and in turn show respect for your colleagues' time) by stating in an inoffensive way your need to attend to pressing responsibilities. This can be done in a tactful manner. Assertiveness, like other communication skills, is an ability that can be learned.

The management of your time can be very much within your control if you know or learn how to identify and handle the many common time wasters that may interfere with your daily work and study responsibilities. A review of the common problems of time management and suggestions for their resolution is beyond the scope of this handbook, but help is readily available if you need it. The topic of time management in teaching is covered in the course for teaching assistants (GSC 777), conducted by the Office of Instructional Development. Occasional seminars in time management are also conducted on campus for the benefit of University faculty and staff by the Department of Management, through the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, and by the Counseling and Testing Center, Clark Howell Hall. These seminars are announced in campus publications such as Columns and Teaching at UGA.

Faculty Relationships

Relationships with faculty generally pose no problem for teaching assistants since the appropriate relationship is already

established by the GTA's status as a graduate student. You are a student with assigned teaching responsibilities, and the faculty members in your department are your teachers and mentors for both your scholarly pursuits and your teaching duties. Similarly, your faculty supervisor is responsible for providing guidance and counsel in your teaching efforts, just as your major professor is responsible for counseling you in your scholastic pursuits.

GTAs are expected to seek assistance and to exercise the same responsibility for learning to perform and excel in their teaching duties as they do in their other scholarly activities. As a GTA, you are accorded the same privileges and rights as other graduate students on assistantships, but you bear an important additional responsibility to the students you teach. Other general information regarding your relationship to your faculty supervisor and to your students is included in subsequent sections of this handbook, but the following paragraph should provide reasonable guidelines as you assume your duties as a graduate teaching assistant.

Relate to your teachers as a student and to your students as a teacher. Excel as a graduate student and aspire to perform well as a teaching assistant. Faculty members are aware of the heavy responsibilities attached to your teaching duties. They expect you to be able to handle your teaching load competently but are available for assistance when you need it. As a GTA, your relationship to the faculty in your department should be that of a dedicated student of teaching who is seeking to improve with experience and through the faculty's example.

Student Relationships

Student relationships should also present no special problems, if you are friendly and maintain respect for your students, treat them fairly and without prejudice, and accord them the same reasonable benefit of the doubt that you hope to receive from your own teachers. The University of Georgia provides an intense educational environment, and students are here to learn. Consequently, most problems with students can be prevented by thorough teacher preparation, careful communication of teacher expectations, and effective teaching. Anything you can do to improve your students' learning opportunities should enhance the relationship you will have with your class. Chapters Two and Three of this handbook contain general information regarding student needs and expectations and offer suggestions for dealing with student-teacher problems. These chapters are recommended reading prior to your first day of class.

Your students have a right to expect you to be their most accessible source of guidance and assistance as they seek to

Relate to your teachers as a student and to your students as a teacher.

learn the subject you teach. It is, therefore, very important that your office hours be clear to your students and that you be present and prepared to provide assistance during those hours. Finding an office vacant during announced office hours can have a very negative effect on the attitude and subsequent performance of a student who has conscientiously attempted to adhere to the teacher's announced times and procedures for seeking additional help.

It is also important to remember that the University provides many services to assist students with problems that exceed the teacher's appropriate responsibility and/or ability. A GTA can be helpful and concerned for students' academic needs without becoming involved with their personal lives. If students come to you with personal problems, it will be in the best interests of the students to refer them to the University agency having the expertise to offer counseling on such matters. The Student Handbook contains descriptions and phone numbers of the agencies which exist to assist students in the resolution of problems of an economic, emotional, health, or legal nature. By referring students to the appropriate agency for personal or other problems not related to their work in your course, you can insure that they will receive the expert assistance they need in a discreet, compassionate manner and can free your own time to attend to your primary duties as a teacher. An academic advisement service is also available to students through their departments, schools, and colleges to assist them in developing their overall degree programs.

Policies, Procedures, and Regulations

Administration and Direction

Official University policies, procedures, and regulations for instruction, including the administration and direction of teaching assistantships, are administered by the Vice President for Academic Affairs through the deans and department heads. The responsibility for developing subject-specific instructional policies and procedures is largely delegated to the individual academic departments. Likewise, laboratory safety regulations originate within the UGA Public Safety Division and are administered at the instructional level through a department's safety officer, supervisor of laboratory instruction, or other designated official. Individual departments may, however, adopt additional regulations as deemed necessary to insure the safe operation of laboratory activities in their particular teaching area. Chapter Four discusses this instructional area in more detail. In all cases, the communication and interpretation of instructional policies to the teaching staff within a department are responsibilities of the department head or a designated representative.

Although some reflect timeless instructional ideals, many policies, procedures, and regulations were developed to fulfill specific instructional needs and are therefore subject to change as is necessary to accommodate changing needs within the various departments. Consequently, a comprehensive listing of policies and procedures applicable to all teaching assistants at The University of Georgia is beyond the scope of this handbook.

Some departments have developed general instructional guides for their faculty members. Others may maintain comprehensive policy manuals, often in loose-leaf form for ease in updating. Your department head or a designated representative (your faculty supervisor or coordinator of instruction) is therefore the best source of information regarding the applicability of specific instructional policies or other regulations related to your teaching assistantship. For this reason, you will find frequent reminders throughout this handbook to consult your faculty supervisor or department head. These reminders may seem redundant at times, but they are repeated with good cause. You are responsible for operating within established University policies and procedures, all of which are either administered through or created at the departmental level.

Several general policy matters of concern to most GTAs are listed below. Several of these, such as student rights, uniform grading, and academic honesty, are discussed more fully in subsequent chapters. Many teachers maintain loose-leaf notebooks or personal files of notices, announcements, departmental directives, news items, and other information for general reference regarding instructional matters. However, because of the tentative and often interpretative nature of many rules and regulations, it is very important to clear any critical policy matters with the appropriate supervisor or administrative official. If you have questions or encounter problems regarding policy matters which may affect the students, your department, or yourself, you are advised to consult your supervisor, department

head, or other appropriate University official for reliable, up-to-date information and guidance.

Award and Renewal of Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistantships are awarded and/or renewed at the departmental level, subject to the approval of the Graduate School and Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The availability of teaching assistantships is dependent upon departmental needs for instructional services and the availability of funds to support the positions. The availability of these assistantships is widely publicized by the University, and all graduate students are eligible to apply for teaching assistantships in the department in which they are enrolled. Subject to departmental need and policy, these assistantships are generally awarded on an academic-year basis.

Teaching assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis according to established departmental criteria for scholastic attainment. Renewals are dependent upon satisfactory instructional and academic performance of the teaching assistant, the department's continuing need for the services rendered under the assistantship, and the availability of funds to support the position. Inquiries and applications for teaching assistantships should be directed to the department in which the student is enrolled.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Policies

University policies provide that teaching assistantships will be awarded on a basis of scholastic merit unhindered by

considerations of sex, age, race, color, handicap, veteran status, religion, or national origin. Persons desiring information about The University of Georgia's Affirmative Action Plan should contact the Affirmative Action Office, Room 3, Peabody Hall.

Training, Supervision, and Review

The training, supervision, and review of teaching assistants is a departmental prerogative. Each department has primary responsibility for providing the orientation, training, and supervision necessary to uphold the University's standards for quality instruction. In addition to the general orientation common to all departments, some departments provide formal courses for credit to provide information for their GTAs on instructional techniques appropriate for the subjects they will teach. Some departments also provide intensive, systematic review and evaluation of the performance of GTAs as part of an overall training program for those who may be planning for a teaching career.

Generally, the faculty supervisor or coordinator of instruction to whom a teaching assistant is assigned is responsible for the direction, supervision, and evaluation of that individual's teaching performance according to established departmental policies and procedures. Inquiries regarding your opportunities and responsibilities for training and/or evaluation should therefore be directed to your supervisor. General information regarding other training and instructional resources available on campus may be obtained through the Office of

Instructional Development. A summary of these instructional resources is included in Chapter Eight of this handbook.

Workloads, Courseloads, and Compensation

Workloads, courseloads, and compensation for graduate assistants are regulated by policies originating in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Responsibility for the proper implementation of these policies is delegated to the Dean of the Graduate School. The responsibility for the administration of teaching assistantships is further delegated through the various colleges and schools to the academic departments in which the teaching services will be performed. All appointments to teaching assistantships are subject to approval by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Workloads and compensation for teaching assistantships, although generally uniform over the campus, may vary in some schools or colleges to accommodate specific instructional needs. Information concerning the current rate of pay and other details regarding teaching assistantships in your college or school should be obtained from your faculty supervisor, department head, or graduate coordinator.

Benefits

Benefits for teaching assistants are identical to those for other graduate assistants, including the waiver of out-of-state fees and deferred payment of tuition and fees from the first two paychecks of each term. Inquiries regarding the

waiver of out-of-state fees should be directed to the Graduate School; arrangements for deferment of fees should be made with the Business Office at the time fees are scheduled to be paid.

Special Concerns

Liability Protection

Liability protection for paid employees of The University of Georgia is also applicable to graduate teaching assistants for liability arising in connection with, or as a result of, their employment as GTAs. For further information regarding the University's liability protection plan, contact the Staff Benefits Office.

The University System will assign an attorney to represent instructional staff who may be faced with legal suit arising from the performance of official duties; however, the likelihood of ever needing this representation can be minimized by exercising reasonable responsibility, prudence, and professional discretion and adhering to established University policies and procedures for instruction. Basic responsibilities of this nature include:

1. appropriate supervision of students during class time to minimize student risk from criminal, violent, or otherwise threatening or dangerous behavior;
2. proper and timely instruction of students in safety procedures for laboratory classes and other situations where improper use of supplies or equipment may create dangerous situations;
3. scrutiny of the learning environment to insure that furniture and equipment are maintained at a reasonably safe level of repair;
4. compliance with students' rights to privacy regarding records, grades, and personal information [however, if a student threatens violent or criminal action, such as suicide or public peril, call the University Health Services or the University Police];

5. discretion and courtesy in handling student problems [for example, never accuse a student of cheating in front of a class and avoid defaming or ridiculing comments about students].

When faced with a difficult situation, teachers are expected to act as other reasonable, prudent persons within the profession would act under similar circumstances. Any actions or decisions which may adversely affect the records of a student (such as assigning a failing grade or reporting cheating) should have a factual and supportable basis, should reflect good judgment and reasonable standards, and should be handled in compliance with established University policies and procedures. Further information regarding problems of academic dishonesty, student-teacher difficulties, and grading is included in Chapters Five and Six of this handbook.

Tax Status of Assistantships

Income taxes are assessed by the federal government and the State of Georgia. Earned income at The University of Georgia is reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Georgia Department of Revenue, and the employee on a W-2 form. Tax returns for a taxable year must be filed by April 15 of the following year. Compliance with federal and state income tax requirements is the responsibility of the individual. Tax forms may be obtained from the local office of the Internal Revenue Service (listed below) and at most post offices.

International students earning money in the United States are generally required to file tax returns under the same laws as those which apply to United States citizens, unless they are specifically excluded from doing so by a tax treaty.

International students can receive help regarding the tax status of their income by contacting the University's Office of International Services and Programs (listed below).

The Internal Revenue Service generally considers a graduate teaching assistant's income to be a taxable salary. If your department has an established written requirement that all its graduate students must have teaching experience in order to obtain the degree you are seeking, your income from the minimum amount of teaching necessary to meet that requirement may be tax exempt. In such cases, all of the following criteria must apply: (1) you must be a candidate for a degree at an educational institution at the time the income is earned; (2) you must perform research, teaching, or other services for that institution which satisfy existing, specifically stated requirements for the degree you seek; (3) equivalent services must be required of all candidates for the degree, regardless of whether they receive equivalent compensation; and (4) the services must not be in excess of the specifically stated requirements for that degree.

Please note that the above information does not modify either official federal or state tax regulations or departmental policies. Whether income from an individual assistantship may be excludable income remains a matter of interpretation. If audited, you will be individually responsible for providing the necessary records to support your declared tax status. Information and/or documentation regarding degree requirements should be obtained from your academic department, and information

about tax-exempt fellowships and/or assistantships should be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (listed below).

If you have questions about your tax status or filing procedures, you may call, write, or visit:

Internal Revenue Service
Federal Building, Room 306
East Hancock Avenue
Athens, GA 30601
Phone: (toll free) 1-800-222-1040

Georgia Revenue Department
P. O. Box 1843, 798 Prince Avenue
Athens, GA 30601
Phone: 404-542-6116

Office of International Services and Programs
(international students only)
214 Clark Howell Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
Phone: 404-542-1557

Handicapped Students

The University of Georgia provides equal educational opportunities for handicapped students as required by federal regulations. The Office of Handicapped Student Services supplies transportation and other services for handicapped students in compliance with University policy. Additional information regarding the services provided by the University and the teachers' responsibilities for helping to insure equal educational opportunity for handicapped students is included in Chapter Six of this handbook.

Student Rights to Privacy

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (sometimes referred to as "The Buckley

Amendment"), The University of Georgia guarantees students certain rights related to their educational records. Compliance with University policy on student education records is very important. Teaching assistants are encouraged to review the complete policy statement, which may be obtained at the Office of Judicial Programs (Academic Building), the Registrar's Office (Academic Building), or the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Old College).

The essence of the University's Policy Statement of Student Education Records is reflected in an abbreviated statement, published in 1977, declaring:

> The University of Georgia guarantees any student, regardless of age, who is or has been in attendance at the University the right of access to inspect and review any and all official records, documents, and other materials created during the period of enrollment which relate directly to him/her, subject only to certain specific exceptions. With other limited exceptions, no personally identifiable information from the education records of a student will be disclosed to any third party by any official or employee of the University without the written consent of the student.

Extreme care should be taken to insure that the handling of student records is in full compliance with established University policy. Other information regarding students' rights and responsibilities is included in the Student Handbook. In general, students at The University of Georgia are guaranteed all the freedoms, rights and privileges accorded all United States citizens; and all students are responsible for abiding by all federal, state, and local laws, as well as the University's conduct and academic regulations.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia expects the highest degree of honesty and integrity of all students in every aspect of their academic careers. Consequently, the University has developed stringent regulations regarding academic honesty. All members of the academic community, students and teachers alike, are expected to share in the responsibility for upholding these regulations. The regulations are reproduced in the Student Handbook. The University's policies and regulations on academic honesty have also been stated in clear, easy to understand terms in two brochures, An Honest Education and Honesty is the Only Policy at UGA, available through the Division of Student Affairs, Judicial Programs. You are encouraged to distribute a copy of the brochure entitled An Honest Education to each student and clearly explain the University's regulations on academic honesty at the beginning of each quarter. Copies of this brochure may be obtained from the Office of Judicial Programs, Room 210 Academic Building.

Student Safety

Safety is a twenty-four-hour-a-day concern at The University of Georgia's Public Safety Division and its two subunits, the University Police Department and the Environmental Safety Services Department. The functions of each department are spelled out in the Student Handbook; and you are especially encouraged to review the sections on "Fire Safety," "Tornado Safety," "Biosafety" and "Environmental Health."

If your teaching assignment will involve exposing yourself or your students to possible hazards, you must adhere to the

University's rules and regulations for safe operations. Information concerning laboratory safety is included in Chapter Four of this handbook. Additional information you may need concerning this or other environmental safety matters should be obtained from your supervisor, departmental safety officer, or the Environmental Safety Services Department.

Accidental Injuries

Accidental injuries involving students should be reported to the Environmental Health Office on a student accidental injury form (Safety Form 5), which may be obtained from the Environmental Safety Services Department. Safety hazards observed on campus should also be reported to the department involved or the Environmental Health Office.

Grievance Procedures

If properly understood and used, grievance procedures provide a positive, constructive means to solve misunderstandings and reach fair resolution of grievances. The University of Georgia provides both faculty and affirmative action grievance procedures. Since many complaints or grievances result from simple misunderstandings, which can be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of everyone involved, the first step in any grievance procedure is to attempt to resolve the issue with the concerned individual's immediate supervisor. If a teaching assistant has a complaint relating to his or her teaching function, every effort should be made to resolve the issue with the faculty supervisor or coordinator of instruction. If the supervisor cannot resolve the problem, the matter may then be

referred to the department head. If this recourse fails, a written grievance may be submitted to the appropriate dean's office. For further information about the established grievance procedure, contact the University's Affirmative Action Office.

Advantages of a Teaching Assistantship

Perhaps the most immediate benefit of your experience as a teaching assistant will be the intrinsic reward of knowing that you are helping to disseminate an understanding of your chosen field of study. In fact, the courses you teach or assist in teaching may constitute the only exposure many students will have to your subject. Your assistantship is also an excellent stimulus to your personal learning. It has often been observed that one of the most effective ways to acquire a thorough understanding of a subject is to teach that subject to others; consequently, many GTAs gain additional confidence in their knowledge of their field and feel better prepared for their qualifying examinations. In addition to the obvious financial benefits, your assistantship should be an important contribution to your academic progress.

If college teaching is your ultimate career goal, the future benefits of your teaching assistantship are obvious. You will have an opportunity to find out what teaching is really like and to confirm or revise your career aspirations and philosophy of teaching on the solid basis of experience. A resume showing proven teaching experience and letters of reference affirming your teaching competence should carry weight in the increasingly rigorous competition for academic appointments. So be sure your

supervisor, major professor, department head, and other faculty members who may provide references are aware of both your enthusiasm for teaching and your efforts to improve with experience. You may wish to invite your superiors to visit your classes and critique your performance since professors who have direct knowledge of your teaching ability can write convincing letters of recommendation.

If you are preparing for a non-teaching career, the interpersonal and organizational skills necessary for effective teaching may be transmitted to other applications. For instance, being able to present material clearly and concisely will help you in job interviews and business or professional presentations; and your experience in recognizing and resolving classroom problems can be applied to other group supervision situations. The communication skills so important to productive teaching and the ability to evaluate the work of others are also important qualifications for virtually any profession or career.

The interpersonal and organizational skills necessary for effective teaching may be transmitted to any career.

Whatever your career aspirations, you will benefit from your teaching experience. For this reason, you are encouraged to enhance that benefit by taking advantage of every opportunity for training provided by your department and other University agencies. For information regarding the types of instructional improvement activities available on campus, contact the Office of Instructional Development.

The chapter which follows addresses the topic "Preparing to Teach."

CHAPTER TWO

PREPARING TO TEACH

Each teacher and each student is a unique individual, thus teaching styles and philosophies are highly individualized. The instructional process is, therefore, an intensely human, highly challenging interaction which defies either exhaustive explanation or analysis. Teaching is as variable as the personalities involved. Obviously, there can be no definitive resource on "how to teach," and this fact should be kept clearly in mind when reading the rest of this handbook. The comments in this and the following chapters are intended to be helpful suggestions--but certainly not prescriptions--for the beginning college teacher who has had little or no training or experience in teaching.

Defining Your Responsibilities

There are three important steps that should be taken as soon as possible after receiving your assistantship: first, find out who your faculty supervisor or coordinator of instruction will be; second, contact that person to determine what will be expected of you; and third, begin preparing for your assignment. The type of work assigned to teaching assistants may vary from department to department or even within departments, depending on departmental policies and needs. A clear understanding of your department's expectations will help to guide your initial preparation and will also serve to prevent many problems later on.

Generally, the immediate concern of new GTAs is whether they will be teaching a course or assisting a professor who will do the teaching. In some departments, teaching assistants are assigned complete responsibility for introductory courses from the first day of class to the assigning and reporting of final grades. In other departments, all or most courses are taught by the regular faculty, with GTAs assisting in such matters as monitoring tests, assisting students, grading papers, conducting laboratory or quiz sections, setting up and dismantling equipment, and/or teaching in the absence of the professor.

Assisting a Professor

If you will be assisting a professor, you may work on a one-to-one basis, or you may be one of several GTAs assisting with a large class. In either case, you should meet with the teacher before the course begins to help with pre-course preparations and to establish the channels of communication that will be needed for an effective working relationship throughout

If you will be assisting a professor, you may work on a one-to-one basis, or you may be one of several GTAs assisting with a large class.

the quarter. These initial meetings will also provide an opportunity for you to gain insight into the professor's approach to teaching and to clarify any questions about the course and your responsibilities. Examples of the sort of information you may need to obtain are discussed below.

The Goals of the Course

From the start, the goals of the course should be clearly understood. Reviewing the course syllabus and texts will help to grasp the content and scope of the course. Discussions with the teacher regarding the delivery of materials will give you a chance to plan ahead more effectively for your own participation. Reviewing the exams the professor has used in previous course sessions can provide insight into the importance attached to the various themes and topics to be covered.

Attendance at Class Sessions

Depending on the nature of your responsibilities, your attendance at class sessions may or may not be required. If you will be conducting quiz sections, for instance, you may be required to attend all lectures to insure that you are well informed on the materials covered in lectures. On the other hand, your supervisor may prefer for you to devote the class time to other course-related responsibilities.

Training and Orientation

In many departments, sessions are conducted to provide any course-specific training that may be needed beyond that attainable through the professor-GTA relationship. Participation in other training courses, such as the course for graduate

teaching assistants (GSC 777) conducted by the Office of Instructional Development, may also be recommended or required for future assignments or professional development. Information regarding training requirements and opportunities should be obtained as soon as possible, since these activities will have to be coordinated with your own work and study schedule.

Grading Responsibilities

If you will be responsible for any facet of the evaluation of student performance, you are strongly encouraged to read Chapter Five, "Student Evaluation." You should also carefully review The University of Georgia's policies governing students' rights of access and privacy regarding grades and other student records. Information regarding these policies should be obtained from your supervisor or department head. Equitable grading practices are necessary to assure fair treatment of students, and adherence to all University policies regarding students' rights to privacy regarding grades is essential.

Scheduled Office Hours

The scheduling of office hours is required of many GTAs, especially those who conduct laboratory or quiz sections or are otherwise responsible for assisting students on a personal basis.

Student-Teacher Relationships

These relationships are very important to any GTA who is in direct contact with students. The sections on "Student-Teacher Conflicts" and "Maintaining Order in the Classroom" in Chapter Six of this handbook should be required reading for all GTAs who will work with students in any capacity.

Conducting a Complete Course

If you will be responsible for conducting a complete course, you are encouraged to read the remainder of this chapter and Chapters Three, Five, Six, and Seven of this handbook as soon as possible. As explained earlier, this handbook is in no way intended to replace or supplant the guidance and/or training provided by your department. Rather, it is intended to provide general, supplementary information that will help you to maximize both your teaching effectiveness and the attainment of your own academic objectives.

Planning the Course

The importance of planning cannot be overemphasized. The more thorough the planning before a course begins, the smoother the conduct of the course. So once you have determined that you will be responsible for a course, the sooner you can start planning, the better. Certain information you will need to know immediately. Are the course schedule, syllabus, textbooks, and format prescribed by the department or prepared by the individual teacher? Has a classroom been reserved for the class? Have the textbooks been ordered and the library notified of any books that should be put on reserve? Will departmental tests and exams be used, or will each teacher prepare his or her own evaluation instruments? If you do not know the answer to any of these questions, check with your supervisor as soon as possible. You may have a lot of preparation to do.

During the first quarter of your assistantship, you will probably not be responsible for any long-range planning

activities. In many departments, such activities are never delegated to teaching assistants. But to be safe, check with your supervisor. Be sure to learn anything you can about those pre-course activities which have already been completed in case you should be responsible for all course aspects the next quarter, the next year, or on your first job after graduation.

Remember that your department and your students are depending on you to exercise professional responsibility in your teaching role. This responsibility means that you are expected either to be able to determine what needs to be done, to do it effectively, and to do it on time or to seek the direction or help you need. Above all, do not hesitate to turn to your supervisor for guidance when you need it or when you are in doubt.

Several general topics of importance in course planning are reviewed below, and additional course-specific information on these and other topics may be obtained from your supervisor and others who have previously taught the course. Chapter Three of this handbook contains additional useful information for course planning, including teaching strategies; and Chapter Five focuses on evaluation procedures.

Compliance with Instructional Policies

The University of Georgia has established instructional policies and procedures to provide an effective learning environment. General information regarding policies for such matters as equal educational opportunity for handicapped students, student rights and responsibilities, safety, academic honesty, and the handling of student-teacher problems is provided

in Chapter Six of this handbook. Specific information regarding these and other instructional policies is available from your supervisor or department head. It is very important to remember that you are responsible for compliance with all established University policies and procedures throughout the conduct of your instructional duties.

Course Design

Many educators advise that the first step in course design is to determine the basic aims of the course and work backwards toward the specific activities that will be required to accomplish those aims. In Chapter Two of Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher (1986), McKeachie outlines a logical step-by-step procedure which proceeds from the initial writing of course objectives to preparation for the first class period. This process, he advises, should ideally begin several months prior to the date the course is to begin. Since very few GTAs at The University of Georgia are likely to be solely responsible for initial course design, only a brief outline of the process is presented below for your general information.

Organizing questions. Several initial questions must be answered before deciding on the design of a course. How should it relate to the rest of the department's curriculum? Should it build on material from other courses, or will it serve as a prerequisite for other courses? Will most of the students be freshmen or new majors in the field? Once these questions are answered, you can decide what sort of courses will be needed to fulfill the department's needs. Next, define what the students

will need to learn by the end of a course and reduce this information into a few brief sentences. By following this procedure, you will have established the basic purpose and objectives of the course.

Course outline. At this point, it would probably be helpful to organize your ideas into course outline form by listing the major topics you will need to include to accomplish your purposes. From this list, sketch out the basic content, concepts, processes, and skills that you feel should be covered under each topic. Review the resulting information for ambiguities, redundancies, and missing or superfluous content. After the outline has been reworked, estimate the number of class days needed to cover each topic.

The syllabus. The next step involves fitting the material you will need to cover, along with the necessary time for tests and exams, into the time available for the course. A practical reassessment of the proposed content will indicate any substantial revisions that may be required to formulate a rough course schedule. After revising the schedule, add it to the original statement of purpose and objectives of the course, and you will have a preliminary course syllabus. Show these materials to your supervisor and make any changes required to make the course consistent with departmental needs and standards. Generally, it is helpful to review the syllabus with other teachers in the department for suggestions for improvement.

As indicated earlier, it is unlikely that a teaching assistant will be involved in original course design, but the above information may help you to more fully understand the

process by which college courses are developed. Anyone assigned to teach a course for the first time should find it helpful to review a copy of the original course syllabus, which is on file in the department.

Textbook Selection and Orders

Since your purpose should be to present the course material in as clear and effective a manner as possible, the importance of careful textbook selection cannot be overemphasized. You may find that a single textbook supports the course sufficiently, or you may choose to use two or more publications. The cost of several textbooks may, however, present a budgetary difficulty for some students. Your supervisor can provide information regarding departmental textbook policies and procedures for obtaining copies of textbooks for review. Your supervisor and other faculty members in your department may also have suggestions regarding textbook selection or alternate readings.

Orders for textbooks and specialized student supplies (such as hand lenses, dissecting kits, and so forth) should be submitted on textbook order forms supplied to all academic departments by the University Bookstore. Orders must be placed many weeks in advance to provide the time needed by the Bookstore to procure the materials. In most cases, textbooks for courses taught by GTAs will have already been ordered by the department; therefore, you should check with your supervisor before requesting any textbooks or supply orders to avoid possible duplication of orders and to insure compliance with departmental and Bookstore policies and procedures.

Library Reserve Books

Books, periodicals, sample exams, and other reference materials may be placed on reserve at the Main Library and at the Science Library by filling out a library reserve form, which may be obtained from the department secretary or the reserve desk at the Main Library. Reserve lists should be submitted at least thirty days prior to the beginning of the quarter. Additional information regarding the policies and provisions for library reserves may be obtained from your supervisor, the Main Library, or the Science Library.

Selection of Teaching Strategies

Once the course outline is available to a teacher, it becomes that teacher's responsibility to select from his or her repertoire of teaching strategies the method or methods by which the course will be taught. In a few cases, the nature of a course may dictate a specific teaching method throughout the course. In most cases, however, a course may be much improved by the skillful use of a variety of teaching strategies. Chapter Three of this handbook contains a discussion of "Teaching Methods and Instructional Strategies," describing several of the more common teaching techniques and their applications. Your supervisor and other faculty members may also provide invaluable guidance in this important facet of course planning.

Class Schedule and Location

Classes are normally scheduled for fifty minutes, with fifteen minutes between classes. However, this format is at

times modified to accommodate the special needs of courses, such as those involving laboratory sections or in-service training for professionals. No changes in established class schedules should be made unless approved by the department head or dean in accordance with University policy.

Classroom assignments are made on a University-wide basis by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Requests for classroom space should be initiated through the department and should include specific information about the scheduled time of classes, the required seating capacity, the form of seating arrangement, and other facilities or equipment that will be needed.

No changes in classroom location should be made without prior approval. It is therefore advisable to visit a newly assigned classroom as soon as possible so that any necessary changes may be approved before classes begin. If a classroom location differs from that in the Schedule of Classes provided by the Registrar's Office, the correct location should be posted conspicuously in the vicinity of the location listed in the schedule from the first day of classes throughout the drop-add period.

Classroom Preparation

The teaching environment can exert a strong influence on both your teaching and your students' learning. Practical suggestions for enhancing the learning environment are included in Chapter Three of this handbook. Other teachers who have worked in your classroom area may also have very helpful

suggestions. An informal survey of students may also produce helpful ideas for making the area more conducive to learning.

Room organization is very important, and such factors as seating arrangements can do much to facilitate or hinder effective interaction. Consequently, it is important to check the classroom at the earliest possible opportunity to make sure that it contains the type of facilities or the flexibility that will be required for your course. If you should feel that a change in classroom location or facilities is necessary, consult with your supervisor as soon as possible for advice and assistance in resolving the problem in compliance with established policies and procedures.

Many classroom preparations, such as the mounting of maps, charts, displays, posters or the stocking of supplies and materials in storage areas, may be accomplished before classes begin. To reduce the possibility of conflict over display or storage space, it is advisable to coordinate any special classroom preparations with teachers who may be using the

The teaching environment can exert a strong influence on both your teaching and your students' learning.

classroom during other class periods. Any preparations that can be efficiently handled before classes begin will help to expedite your work throughout the course.

Laboratory Safety

All teaching assistants charged with responsibility for science laboratory sections must make plans to insure the safety of students in the laboratory setting. Please refer to Chapter Four for a discussion of appropriate procedures and precautions.

Field Trips

Field trips and other course-enrichment activities are encouraged provided they are legitimately related to a scheduled class at the University, are educational in nature, and are conducted in full compliance with applicable University rules and regulations. Field trips must be requested on the proper forms, which must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs in time for approval prior to the trip. Excuses from other classes for participation in a field trip are

Field trips and other course-enrichment activities serve a useful purpose when they supplement classroom activities.

individual matters between the students and the instructors of those courses. Check with your faculty supervisor to obtain information regarding departmental and University policies and rules for field trips and the provisions for liability protection of teachers conducting such activities.

Office Hours

Many departments require that teaching assistants maintain scheduled office hours for student consultations; your supervisor can advise you regarding your department's requirements. Because it is very important to student-teacher rapport that the teacher be present and available to assist students during regularly scheduled office hours, office hours should be selected carefully to avoid conflict with your other responsibilities.

The Syllabus

Once the major planning activities are completed, a syllabus should be prepared for distribution to the students. Ideally, the syllabus should contain the following: a course description, including a brief statement of the purpose and objectives of the course; a brief course outline and calendar, including the topics to be covered and the dates for tests, exams, term paper submission, and so forth; a list of supplemental references and/or materials placed on library reserve; a list of textbooks and supplies the students should purchase; your office hours, the location of the office, and your phone number; and a statement of your policies on grading, attendance, academic honesty, and other related matters.

Student assignments. Assignments should be carefully coordinated with the overall course objectives and designed to improve the comprehension of the facts, concepts, and skills you are responsible for teaching. Assignments should also be intended to extend the context of the course beyond the confines of the classroom and make the material relevant to the students' interests and experiences. Assignments should also be appropriate to the level and scope of the course. This latter consideration may be especially important for an enthusiastic, inexperienced GTA who may sometimes inadvertently expect higher levels of student performance than may be realistic for most introductory undergraduate courses. For this reason, new GTAs are encouraged to review with their supervisors proposed student assignments for initial courses.

All assignments should be clear and presented far enough in advance to enable the average student to complete them without experiencing undue pressure. Many general assignments, such as reading assignments for each major topic, can be included in the syllabus; whereas others, such as the periodic assignment of problems or worksheets, may be more conveniently handled on a day-to-day basis. In any case, the syllabus should clearly alert the students to special expectations, such as term papers and periodic assignments. Generally, the clearer you can make your expectations to the students from the start, the more successful you will be in facilitating desired outcomes.

Student evaluation. Your plans for evaluating your students should also be clearly stated in the syllabus, including the schedule for all tests and exams and a statement of your

grading policies. Although most teachers prefer to develop tests and exams shortly before they are to be administered (for reasons of test security and relevance), it is helpful to plan in advance both the types of tests and the test schedule. If you plan to use objective tests, you can be alert for individual test items as you prepare for each class session. Then, when the time for test preparation arrives, you should have a more than adequate bank of test items. The section on monitoring student progress in Chapter Five of this handbook should be helpful if you will be involved in any facet of student evaluation and grading.

Secretarial Assistance

Next to your supervisor, the department secretaries will probably be your most valuable source of support in your teaching efforts. They are specialists in their fields and experts at typing, copying, and preparing materials. Many secretaries are also responsible to several faculty members, so be sure to check with your supervisor regarding your department's provisions for secretarial assistance for GTAs.

Most important, remember that you the teacher, not the secretary, are responsible for planning ahead. So be sure to turn in your requests for typing, duplication, and so forth far enough ahead of the time you need them for your request to be fulfilled without difficulty. Finally, get to know the person you will be working with and ask for information about the kind of turnaround time you should expect on routine jobs, such as typing and collating tests. Plan for that turnaround time in

your own schedule, and you should always be able to have the materials you need when you need them without inconveniencing others.

Beginning The Course

Even experienced teachers sometimes approach the first day of class with uneasiness because every course is a new experience and no two classes are ever alike. Do not be overly concerned about your own fears but do be prepared. As indicated throughout this handbook, careful preparation is the key to successful teaching. Preparation may be more important than ever for the first day of class, since the initial session generally sets the tone for the rest of the course. If the teacher appears to be in charge, purposeful, and enthusiastic, the students will be more confident that the course will be a worthwhile investment of their time.

The agenda for the first day usually consists of three activities: taking care of administrative details, meeting the students, and introducing the subject. The following information is intended to help the new GTA have some idea what to expect with regard to each activity. In addition, there are also a few very important, last-minute precautions you should take: 1) be sure the room is unlocked, properly lighted, and clean; 2) be sure there is plenty of chalk, an eraser, and a clean chalkboard; 3) be sure you have the preliminary class roll, copies of the syllabus, and any notes you will need; and 4) be on time. If possible, be ready ahead of time so you can relax a few minutes

before the class begins. If you are prepared and ready to go when class time arrives, you will be off to a good start.

Administrative Details

Many students may still be "shopping around" for a course on the first day of class, so several may show up who have not registered for your course. By contrast, some students who have preregistered may have changed their minds and will drop the course. Still others may become discouraged by their first-day experience in another course and decide to switch to your class. More rarely, you may have a student inquire about challenging the course. Consequently, you may expect to have your share of administrative details to handle during the first few days of the quarter.

General information on University policies and procedures for dropping or adding courses, auditing or challenging courses, and other administrative matters is included in the current editions of The University of Georgia's Student Handbook and the Bulletin for undergraduate study. Rules and procedures regarding some administrative matters necessarily differ from department to department; therefore, you should clarify with your supervisor or other designated department official any questions you may have regarding regulations, procedures, and teacher responsibility for problems of enrollment, course changes, and so forth. Obviously, this information should be obtained prior to the beginning of classes to insure the appropriate response to any problems that may arise.

Meeting the Students

Finally you will get to meet the class, and your students will probably be equally eager to see what you are like. Some teachers prefer to delay the beginning of the first class session to give latecomers a chance to arrive. Unless there is very good justification for a delay (such as a change in the scheduled meeting place), it is advisable to start on time for several reasons: the locations and times of classes are clearly published in the Schedule of Classes, and those who arrive on time should not be required to waste their time waiting for a few stragglers; you will set a precedent for punctuality from the very beginning; and you will establish a tone that will help the students realize the importance you attach both to the course and to their time.

Experienced teachers use many different ways to broach the awkwardness of the first few moments of student-teacher interaction, and probably the most common is to hand out a syllabus. This gives the teacher a meaningful first action to perform, places useful information into the student's hands, and gives both teacher and students a common ground for initial communication. Once the syllabus is distributed, you can introduce yourself and write your name and the name and number of the course on the chalkboard. (This will help students who may have wandered into the wrong classroom to discover their error immediately.) Next, list your office location, office hours, and telephone number on the board. Although this information should already be included in the syllabus, writing it on the board will give you a chance to make doubly sure that your students are

aware of your interest and accessibility if they should need help during the course.

The first fifteen or twenty minutes may be devoted to a review of the syllabus. This will enable you to explain any information that needs clarification. It is generally helpful to review briefly the overall course schedule, including the dates for tests and exams, and introduce the textbooks and other materials the students will need to purchase. If a library reserve list or list of references is included, it is often beneficial to discuss briefly why you feel these resources are important to the course. It is also very important to explain clearly the kind of assignments you will give, the grading procedures you will use, and the varieties of tests your students may expect. In general, the clearer you can be from the start regarding what you expect of the students, the less likely you are to encounter misunderstandings later on in the course.

By the time you have reviewed the syllabus, all the students should have found their way to the classroom. The next step is to check the roll.

Preliminary Class Rolls

Preliminary rolls are printed and distributed to the departments prior to the first period on the first day of classes. Additions to and deletions from the preliminary roll may result from late registrations and drop/add procedures; therefore, a subsequent confirmation roll, listing all students who are officially registered, will be distributed after all late registrations and course changes have been processed.

Information and instructions for the routine handling of rolls is included on the back of the class roll form.

Probably you will have a few students not listed on the preliminary roll. Some may have registration forms confirming late registration for the course, in which case their names should appear later on the confirmation roll. If students do not have proof of registration, they should be advised that they will have to complete the registration or drop/add procedure for enrollment in the course. A student wishing to audit a course must register as an auditor and pay the fees for the course.

Administrative details related to the initial roll call usually take only a few moments, but it is generally better to reserve the class time for course-related activities and handle individual administrative details before or after class. Consequently, you may wish to ask those who are not listed on the roll to check with you at the end of the class period rather than to attempt to resolve any enrollment problems during class.

Attendance Policies

Your attendance policies should be clearly explained at the beginning, especially if attendance and/or class participation will be computed into students' grades. Policies of attendance and the handling of absences are generally left to the discretion of the individual faculty member; but, as indicated in the Student Handbook, regular class attendance is expected of students at The University of Georgia. You will be required to verify the confirmation roll shortly after classes begin, but you are also encouraged to develop a procedure for monitoring attendance throughout the rest of the course.

Excessive absenteeism is counterproductive to all in a structured classroom learning situation. A discreet word of caution to students early in the course is often sufficient to correct this problem, so a means of early detection of attendance problems can be a very effective educational procedure. In summary, if attendance is important in your course, your concern for their attendance should help to emphasize that fact to your students.

Tutorial Assistance

Assistance in many undergraduate courses is offered free of charge to all UGA students by University Tutorial, 203 Clark Howell Hall. Students sometimes seek private tutorial services, but arrangements for private tutoring must be made on the student's own initiative. It is University policy that no person may charge a fee for tutoring any student for whose grade he or she may be in any way responsible. Prior to the beginning of classes, you should determine from your supervisor whether free tutorial services may be available for students enrolled in the course you teach.

Introducing the Subject

Many students will not have purchased the textbook or otherwise prepared themselves for your course. Also, much of your first class period will probably have passed by the time you complete such initial activities as the distribution of the syllabus and calling of the roll. The remainder of the period can be put to very good use, however, by introducing the subject

you will teach and answering any questions the students may have about the course.

For instance, it should be very helpful to your students if you would briefly describe the subject you will teach and explain why its study is important. Many teachers use this time to go over the purpose and objectives of the course and justify each objective in terms relevant to the students' overall academic objectives. Your supervisor and other teachers in your department may have helpful and practical suggestions regarding other interesting ways to introduce the subject. Whichever approach you choose, however, it is generally most beneficial to the students if the information you present will help them to integrate the materials you will be presenting in later class sessions and in subsequent classes at the University.

Probably sooner than you expect, the first class period will be over. After completing a few administrative details, you will be ready for the next segment of your job: teaching the course. Chapter Three is dedicated to that task.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING

The specific responsibilities of graduate teaching assistants may vary widely from department to department. Consequently, this chapter is focused on general teacher-related concerns and responsibilities rather than specific teaching duties. If your assignment includes the primary responsibility for the teaching of a complete course, you should review this entire chapter. Conversely, if your duties are limited to specific responsibilities, such as the grading of papers or the conduct of laboratory or discussion sessions, you may wish to review only those sections most relevant to your situation. In any case, you should work closely with your faculty supervisor to insure that your duties are carried out according to departmental policies and expectations. Finally, as you develop your personal philosophy of teaching, the most important aspect to keep in mind is the ultimate goal of your teaching: student learning.

Dimensions of Effective Teaching

Teaching Style

Teaching is a highly individualized activity, and the student-teacher interaction is an intense human relationship that encompasses a broad range of personalities and behaviors. There is no "best" or "most effective" teaching style which will work well for all teachers. Many beginning teachers attempt to imitate the style of a favorite teacher from the past, but the most successful teaching styles are those that develop as naturally as possible from a teacher's own personal characteristics.

The most effective teaching style for you will be one that reflects a combination of sound teaching techniques, knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm for teaching, and sensitivity to your own personal attributes. For example, if you are by nature a formal person, an attempt to assume an informal manner may appear to your students to be just that, an assumed posture. Whatever your style, you can generally perform in a more relaxed manner if you simply maximize your own best personality traits. In general, if you come across to your students as a caring person, their appreciation for your personal sincerity will enhance their impression of you as a teacher.

Preparation for Teaching

Being prepared to teach involves knowing what to teach and knowing how to teach it. In general, knowing what to teach will come from a combination of your expertise in the subject, the course syllabus or equivalent content outline, and careful pre-class preparation. Knowing how to teach will come from the study of effective teaching methods.

Unfortunately, as noted by Kenneth F. Eble in The Craft of Teaching (1979), there are three common myths concerning effective teaching: 1) if you know the subject, then you can teach the course; 2) effective teachers are born, not made; and 3) "effective teaching" cannot be defined. Educational research indicates that these assumptions are not valid. Several dimensions of effective teaching have been identified; these include: 1) knowledge of the subject to be taught, 2) organization and preparation for teaching, 3) instructional delivery skills, 4) evaluational skills, and 5) enthusiasm for

teaching. As this list indicates, knowledge of the subject is only one dimension. It must be complemented by other skills to produce effective teaching.

The first four dimensions of effective teaching can be learned through formal study. While the fifth, enthusiasm for teaching, is very sensitive to such factors as personal attitude, it can also be enhanced through the study of teaching theory and methodology. No one can tell you how to teach, but there is general agreement among educators that teaching effectiveness is directly related to competency in each of the five areas described above. In other words, there is a worthwhile, communicable body of knowledge and skills related to teaching. You may greatly improve your teaching effectiveness by learning as much as you can about each area of teaching expertise.

Knowledge of the Subject

Three subject-related prerequisites for effective teaching are: having a breadth of knowledge, which you attain and maintain through your graduate studies; being up-to-date in your field, which may be accomplished by frequent review of research publications and professional journals; and having the ability to analyze and present concepts, which comes from a thorough understanding of the subject.

A graduate student's breadth of knowledge is generally sufficient to handle the subject content contained in most textbooks, but an in-depth understanding is also necessary when dealing with the questions of highly motivated students, whose interest may exceed the scope of the text. If you are thoroughly familiar with the subject content, you will be free to "think on

your feet." By revealing your own thought processes and by highlighting relevant concepts and developments as you deal with a question, you can help your students to understand the nature of your discipline. By discussing new developments relating to current theory and by presenting both sides of controversial issues in your field, you can help students to grasp the scope of the subject and to comprehend how theorists tackle problems.

Extensive knowledge of the subject is essential, but be sure to remember that you are not expected to know all the answers all the time. If you are unable to answer a question or have made an error, do not feel compelled to apologize. Simply admit your mistake and tell your students where they may find the answer or that you will find it and get the correct information to them as soon as possible. Your students' respect will be retained much more easily through an honest admission of a lack of knowledge than through an awkward effort to circumvent the question.

Organization and Preparation

The ability to organize information in a clear manner is essential to effective teaching. In Teaching Tips: A Handbook for the Beginning College Teacher (1986), McKeachie points out that course preparation should begin long before a teacher meets a class. He states, "The first step in preparing for a course is the working out of course objectives, because the choice of texts, the selection and order of assignments, the choice of teaching techniques, and all the decisions involved in course planning should derive from your objectives" (p. 8). Next, McKeachie recommends that a course syllabus should be drafted to organize the course content and to fit it within the constraints of time,

place, student expectations, available resources, and/or teacher limitations. For instance, problems regarding such matters as the scheduling of course segments, tests and exams, guest lectures, field trips, and so forth should become obvious as the course activities are blocked out on the school calendar.

In some departments, especially those offering several sections of the same course, the course objectives and syllabi for introductory courses may have already been adopted by the regular faculty. If this is the case with your department, a careful review of the course objectives and syllabus will provide the basic guidelines for your preparation for individual class sessions and will help you to budget your work-study schedule so you can prepare for the more demanding sessions. Remember, you are a student, too, and you need to reserve time for your own studies.

The "tyranny of the clock" will probably be the most persistent test of your organization and preparation. You have to dismiss the class on time, but you also have to cover the subject material. To provide for flexibility, your class preparation should: 1) focus on those topics or activities you consider most important, 2) be enriched with material and/or activities that will help to make the subject more interesting and understandable, and 3) allow reasonable time for student questions. If you find that time is running out, you can concentrate on the more important points and omit extraneous information and/or activities as necessary. Do not rush, but do dismiss the class on time. Class morale is generally highly sensitive to teacher preparation and punctuality, and your extra effort to be prepared and to begin

and end on time will generally be rewarded with better student attitudes and punctuality.

Despite your best efforts, however, there may come a time when you will have to face your class unprepared. In such cases, McKeachie suggests that you should be honest with your students and rescue the situation by using one of several techniques. For instance, you may ask the students to spend a few minutes reviewing the assignment and/or their notes from previous sessions and suggest the questions they would most like to have discussed. Then, you could use the remaining time to deal with the students' expressed instructional needs.

Instructional Delivery Skills

Adequate knowledge of the subject and sufficient class preparation are critical factors for effective teaching; but, once you are behind closed doors with your students, your classroom performance also assumes great importance. Even the best expertise and the most careful preparation can be obscured by a poor presentation. The following discussion of teacher traits and teaching techniques may include helpful hints for increasing both your teaching effectiveness and rapport with your students.

Attentiveness. Look at your students, and watch for those subtle indicators that they may not understand what you are doing or may be losing interest. If you note a few puzzled expressions, for instance, a casual pause at the right time will offer the class a chance to ask questions. At first, you may have to ask if there are any questions; but if your attentiveness is perceived as a genuine interest in your students, the questions should soon come voluntarily. Attention to your students will also help you

to evaluate your use of various teaching methods and to refine your overall teaching style.

Accessibility. Students react to teachers in many ways. Some students in your class may hold you in awe as a formidable expert and be reluctant to approach you for individual assistance. Others may fear that you would be annoyed by a request for help or that an admission of the need for assistance may unfavorably affect your opinion of their scholastic capabilities. Conversely, instructor inaccessibility is interpreted by some students as an indication of teacher insecurity or disinterest.

Accessibility to your students is, therefore, necessary to dispel any such misconceptions. Consequently, it is in your best interest to emphasize early in the course your interest in helping your students by frequent reminders of your office hours and office location. Also, it is generally helpful to remain a few minutes after the class is dismissed to accommodate the needs of students who have brief questions or who need to make an appointment for more extensive assistance. Many of your students may have just completed high school, and your accessibility can be very important in helping them adjust to college-level expectations and performance.

The learning environment. There is general agreement among educators that a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere encourages individual creativity; therefore, reasonable physical comfort should be a continuing consideration in the conduct of a course. Small details, such as making sure that the students' seats are facing the chalkboard you will use during the lecture, can be very important in reducing student fatigue and distraction. Where possible, varying the seating arrangement for different

teaching methodologies can also be effective for increasing student participation. For instance, the lecture format may call for the seats to be arranged in rows facing the front; whereas, a circular arrangement of the seats generally facilitates a relaxed and interactive discussion session.

Simply closing the door at the beginning of class can prevent the distractions of outside noises and movement, and closing the blinds or shades to prevent glare can greatly improve the visibility of a chalkboard. In a large classroom it may also be necessary to use an amplification system to insure that your students can hear you. Other considerations or courtesies, such as the scheduling of short breaks at the mid-point of long class sessions, can be great enhancers of student attitude.

Perhaps the most effective environmental factor at your control, however, is that enhanced by respect for your students' abilities and needs. For instance, meaningful and challenging assignments will indicate your awareness of their abilities and educational needs, while trivial assignments may rightly be

A comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere encourages individual creativity.

considered a waste of time. Assignments that are too hard may discourage sincere students and therefore be counterproductive. In general, your students will have little or no expertise in the subject you teach, but their presence indicates a willingness to learn. Much of the rest is up to you as the primary facilitator of the classroom or laboratory learning environment.

Questioning Skills. The posing of questions by a teacher is a very efficient way to initiate creative classroom participation. The following suggestions are provided to help you improve your own questioning skills: a) formulate your questions to generate discussion, not just pat answers or recitation of facts; b) phrase the question at a level of abstraction or complexity appropriate to the experience of the class; c) allow enough time for the students to respond; d) rephrase the question rather than answer it yourself if no student response is forthcoming within a reasonable time; and e) never ridicule a student's answer. In Teaching Tips (1986), McKeachie outlines several techniques for using questioning skills to generate discussion and includes suggestions for handling the discussion monopolizers and/or non-participants.

Educational research indicates that after asking a question a teacher should allow from three to five seconds for a student response before making any comment. Allowing less time may preclude response from students who are formulating an answer in their minds, and allowing more time may lose the students' attention or create class tension as continuing silence hangs heavily over the classroom. Five seconds may seem like a very long time when you are standing before a silent group of students,

so you may need to develop some discreet means of timing yourself for a few discussion sessions to be sure you allow enough time for creative student responses to your questions.

Questioning skills also extend to the handling of student questions. Lack of response to teacher-generated questions may indicate that student attention is still focused on some prior problem. In such cases, discussion may be more easily generated by asking the students if they have any questions. It is very important to treat questions in this context with respect. A student may understandably be embarrassed if his question is made to appear ridiculous or irrelevant. Of course, it would be unfair to the rest of the class to spend a lot of time answering an irrelevant question; but such situations should be handled courteously, perhaps by offering to discuss the matter after class. Discussion sessions are generally very productive learning environments when all students feel that their questions will be appreciated as evidence of their interest in learning and not as indications of ignorance.

Instructional Aids

The chalkboard. The importance of this humble teaching aid is sometimes obscured by the increasing use of sophisticated audio-visual equipment, computers, and photocopied handouts; but the fact remains that most introductory college courses are taught in traditional classroom and laboratory settings. Consequently, a chalkboard is often an essential aid for creative flexibility in teaching. Some common-sense suggestions for effective chalkboard use are: a) write clearly, b) make letters large enough for the students at the rear of the room to read, c) use the chalkboard

only for important information, d) repeat audibly what you have written to help students who may have visual problems, e) organize the information rather than scatter it over the board, f) avoid writing near the bottom of the board, and g) make sure that nothing is obstructing the students' view of the board.

The overhead projector. Next to the chalkboard, the overhead projector is probably the most frequently used educational tool. A major advantage of this instructional aid is that the lecturer is able to face the audience while discussing information. Also, transparencies may be prepared ahead of time, thereby reducing the time required to present outlines, figures, or other information to the class. Transparencies may be changed at will or overlaid during a lecture, providing greater teacher flexibility. Also, they may be retained for use in future lectures. When using an overhead projector, it is important to remember the students' need for time to take notes; otherwise, the increased flexibility and efficiency in presenting information may overwhelm the class.

Suggestions for the effective use of the overhead include: a) prepare transparencies of complicated diagrams ahead of time, using different color pens to accent key information; b) use several overlays, rather than one "crowded" display, to progressively develop a diagram or concept; c) face the audience, not the screen, while using an overhead projector; d) point to the transparency with a pen to project a shadow on the screen whenever you need to point out information; e) leave the material on the projector long enough for the students to review it thoroughly; and f) avoid blocking the students' view of the screen.

Information and assistance in developing transparencies is available from the University Instructional Resources Center (IRC).

Audio-visual/electronic teaching aids. Few resources can enrich your teaching more than the judicious use of the numerous electronic and electromechanical teaching aids available to the college teacher. Your supervisor and other faculty are sources of information on the equipment and materials available. You are also encouraged to contact the IRC, which exists to serve the instructional needs of the University.

Because of the complexity and diversity of the computers, audio-visual equipment, and other electronic teaching aids and laboratory equipment available, a list of suggestions such as those for the use of the chalkboard is beyond the scope of this handbook. However, there are a few general hints, derived primarily from "Murphy's Law," to keep in mind: a) any essential item that can burn out or break probably will, so be sure to have an extra projector bulb, drive belt, or other "vulnerable" spare

The Instructional Resources Center (IRC) exists to serve the instructional needs of the University.

part; b) if you think you remember how to use the equipment, it is probably a different model, so do not wait until class time to set it up; c) if you did not test the equipment before class, it probably will not work, so test it ahead of time; and d) preview materials such as films, videotapes and computer software before you use them.

Other Teaching Skills

In Professors as Teachers (1978), Eble discusses other simple skills and practices, such as voice and gesture control, varying the pace of presentations, and demonstrations, that can help to make a class session more interesting. He also notes that, occasionally, despite the best preparations, because "...students vary, classes vary, teachers vary, class by class, hour by hour. Nothing works every time" (pp. 37-38). Nevertheless, he counsels, "...good teachers develop their craft. The skilled craftsman, it must be assumed, has a better chance of effecting learning than one who is not" (p. 38). Teaching is a very human enterprise, and any teaching skills that you can develop to help increase student interest and understanding will improve your performance in the classroom.

Historically, teaching skills have received less attention than the other criteria for effective teaching; but the fact remains that the teacher's performance in the classroom is generally the main difference between an interesting, challenging learning experience and a mediocre, matter-of-fact class session. The subject you will teach is interesting and meaningful to you. Fortunately, teaching skills and classroom techniques can be mastered to help you to improve your chances of conveying that

personal interest and meaning to your students. For this reason, you are encouraged to contact your department head or the Office of Instructional Development to obtain information about the various programs available to assist graduate students in developing their teaching skills. (Reference may also be made to Chapter Eight of this handbook.)

Evaluation skills. The ultimate test of teaching is the extent of learning produced, and this is usually assessed by an evaluation of student performance. Effective teaching and dedicated student performance produce learning, but the evidence of the accomplishments of teacher and students alike may be obliterated by poor testing techniques.

The evaluation of student performance ranks among the most important responsibilities a teaching assistant may assume because the quality of evaluation will have a direct, long-lasting effect on both the lives of the students and the TA's reputation as a teacher. Summary information on student evaluation is presented later in Chapter Five. More detailed discussions of the many facets of student evaluation, including testing and grading, may be found in Teaching Tips (1986) and The Craft of Teaching (1979). This subject is also a major topic in the internship for graduate teaching assistants (GSC 777) and is the focus of several courses offered by the College of Education.

Enthusiasm for teaching. Teacher attitudes are vitally related to success in the other dimensions of teaching discussed above. Teachers who are knowledgeable in the subject, thoroughly prepared and organized, and comfortable with their teaching skills generally find it much easier to approach a class with a confident

attitude. The confident teacher is generally more relaxed, talks and moves in a more natural manner, is better prepared to deal with unexpected situations, and is able to be more attentive to the students.

In The Craft of Teaching (1979), Eble has suggested several attitudes that he believes a teacher should attempt to bring to teaching. In addition to teacher confidence, these desirable attitudes include: a) generosity toward the students, to include suspension of judgment of each student's abilities until all evaluation criteria are available; b) unpretentiousness or a lack of arrogance concerning the teacher's superior knowledge of the subject; c) a willingness to involve students more in the conduct of the class, through discussion or other techniques; and d) intellectual honesty, including the ability to admit a lack of total knowledge of the subject and/or related fields. Confidence and enthusiasm are often contagious; consequently, your own attitude and enthusiasm for the opportunity of teaching will generally positively affect the entire class and influence whether the students perceive the course as an exciting learning experience or just another credit to be earned toward graduation.

Teaching Methods and Instructional Strategies

The teaching methods commonly employed on the college level include lectures, demonstrations, laboratory exercises, discussion and quiz sections, field trips, audio-visual presentations, and seminars. Examples of other methods are independent study, programmed instruction and self-study teaching modules. Understandably, new teachers may have a tendency to select the

teaching method with which they are most comfortable as learners; however, an effective teacher generally needs to be proficient in a variety of instructional methods. Since some teaching strategies may be more appropriate than others for attaining a specific educational goal, the day-by-day selection of teaching methods should be based on consideration of the lesson content and objectives, your teaching style, and the students' needs.

If the lesson content is such that it requires the quick, efficient coverage of a lot of facts, teacher-centered methods, such as lectures, demonstrations, slides, or audio-visual presentations, may be indicated. On the other hand, student-centered methods, such as laboratory exercises, field trips, student demonstrations or reports, or reading assignments, may be more effective where intense student involvement is needed to increase the understanding of broad concepts or processes. A detailed description or evaluation of the various teaching methods is beyond the scope of this handbook. The following brief discussions of the use of some of the more common instructional

An effective teacher generally needs to be proficient in a variety of instructional methods.

strategies may be helpful as you seek to develop your own repertoire of teaching techniques.

Lecturing

Lecturing is probably the most common method of teaching at most colleges and universities, especially in introductory and survey courses which require that much material be covered in a short time. Historically, lecturers read to audiences whose access to written materials was limited. Now that printing presses, libraries, and bookstores abound, the original purpose of lecturing is obsolete. However, lecturing remains useful to provide structure and organization to scattered materials and to distill the important points from a barrage of details. Lectures are also very easy to update, and they can serve as excellent reading and self-study guides for the motivated student.

When executed well, lecturing can be one of the most effective and interesting teaching methods available to an instructor; but when poorly performed, it can be most ineffective. Thus, teachers who use lectures must learn to use them well. Unfortunately, competency in lecturing techniques seldom comes naturally or easily to a new teacher; rather, like most other factors in effective teaching, effective lecturing requires careful preparation, organization, and presentation.

Preparation. Once a subject is determined to be compatible with the lecture methodology, it is helpful to outline your objectives for the lecture. What terms, concepts, and background information do you need to provide your students to help them understand the subject? What does your department expect you to accomplish? What teaching aids do you need to enhance the

presentation of the subject matter? Can the subject be covered in one class session, or will several lectures be needed? After you have organized the answers to these questions into a tentative lesson plan, check your plans against the overall course objectives and the course calendar.

Now comes the hard part--deciding what to leave out. It is virtually impossible to cover any subject completely, and an attempt to do so will only overwhelm the students with too many incomprehensible details. Fortunately, the ability to separate a manageable number of important points from a wealth of information will increase with teaching experience. In the meantime, one of the new teacher's most challenging chores may be paring the material down to size.

Many accomplished lecturers advise that the best way to develop a lecture is to force the issue by writing a one-sentence statement which covers the heart of the entire subject in thirty words or less. (The thirty-word limit is arbitrary, but this challenge has proved to be a very efficient way to focus on the essential content.) When you are satisfied that the sentence reveals the essence of the material you wish to cover, rewrite the sentence in the form of a general question. Next, list the three or four key points or arguments that will best help you answer the question. Again, limit each point to a single, brief sentence. Once this is done, you have produced a basic outline for the body of the lecture.

Organization. The next task is to examine the main points and determine the supportive definitions, examples, or illustrations you need to explain the main points of the outline.

References to the text, case studies, current events, and/or new discoveries in the field may be helpful to illustrate the logical unity of your presentation. It may be tempting at this point to add another major point or two, but experienced lecturers generally concur that no more than three or four major points can be effectively developed in a fifty-minute class. To attempt more would defeat the purpose of the lecture method, which is to limit the subject matter to manageable size, and would probably preclude the possibility of student questions or discussions.

Once the body of the lecture is complete, you will need an introduction and summary. In most cases, the general question you used to develop the body of the lecture, followed by a statement of the main points you will discuss, will serve as an effective introduction. A sentence or two to relate the subject to the content of previous class sessions may also help your students to grasp the overall unity of the course. Generally, the concluding summary consists of a recapping of the conclusions developed in the lecture, perhaps followed by homework assignments and a brief preview of the subject of the next class session.

Presentation. The lecture outline should be prepared in a form that will be easy for students to follow as you are lecturing. If the notes are too wordy, the outline will become unwieldy; therefore, the more concise, simple, and to-the-point you can make the notes, the better. The options for preparing the final outline are numerous. For instance, many lecturers use a loose-leaf notebook system. Others use index cards. Whichever system best fits your style is the best for you. No matter the form, it is important to make the notes large enough to read and

concise enough to understand without having to interrupt the progress of your lecture.

It is generally advisable to go over the notes a time or two before class to gain confidence and to time the presentation. Such rehearsals generally go faster than the actual presentation, and you will need to make appropriate adjustments to the lecture content if your trial run pushes the time limit. Pre-class practice sessions also allow an opportunity to work through demonstrations and/or diagrams and to polish up your notes and revise any awkward transitions between major points. Practice will also help you gain independence from your notes and allow you to look at and speak directly to your students as you lecture.

Delivering a lecture calls for skills in voice control, enunciation, pacing of the presentations, enthusiasm, and eye contact. It is essential that lecturers speak loudly enough to be easily heard on the back row and slowly enough to be clearly understood and to allow students to take notes. Special attention must be given to enunciation if the lecturer speaks with an accent or if there are any international students in the audience. It is the teacher's responsibility to deliver the course material in a manner comprehensible to the students. In some cases, it may be necessary to distribute summary outlines or the lecture notes.

Vocal variety, gestures, and movement generally add interest to a lecture but may be distracting if overdone. Probably the most effective lecturers strike a balance between the wooden monotone of the stereotypical lecturer and the dynamic enthusiasm of a cheerleader. Common and extremely distracting faults among new lecturers are: 1) speaking too quietly, 2)

speaking too fast, and 3) letting the voice trail off at the end of a sentence. To check yourself, ask a peer or a professor to critique a lecture or arrange to have a lecture videotaped so you can evaluate yourself. The evaluation process can be disturbing at first, but it can be very helpful for discovering and changing behaviors that distract from student learning.

Eye contact with students throughout a lecture is important to recognize the puzzled frowns or other forms of instant feedback that may indicate a need for further clarification or a pause for questions. Also, frenzied note taking may indicate that your pace is too fast or that you are not clearly differentiating the important points from the supporting information. In general, any way that you can help your students to take good notes, such as writing the key points and definitions on the board, will result in more learning.

If properly handled, the concluding class summary provides a final chance for your students to fill in the gaps in their notes. For this reason, the conclusion should contain a brief restatement of the subject and the main points of the lecture, followed by a summary of the conclusions developed during the session. Good guidelines for structuring the lecture are: in the introduction, briefly preview what you plan to tell the students and tell them why it is important for them to know it; then tell them what they need to know during the main part of the lecture; and in the summary, review what you told them and explain why it is important for them to remember it. By then, the important points of the lecture should be obvious, and you will have served your students well.

Although lecturing has the distinct advantages discussed above, it is a student-passive teaching method and provides relatively low student feedback. Also, it is not as effective as some other methods for challenging students to think for themselves. Consequently, some of the following instructional strategies may be more effective if your objective is to help your students achieve an in-depth understanding of concepts, principles and/or techniques.

Discussions

Discussion sessions have been applauded as one of the most effective teaching methods and also described as one of the most difficult teaching methods available. Whereas lecturing is an efficient method for presenting new information to students who are already motivated, discussion is much more effective for motivating students to learn. Discussion is also very effective for changing student attitudes toward a subject, but its greatest educational advantage may be in the fact that it requires students to think for themselves. A student may gain useful information and formulate ideas through any type of instruction, but concepts so attained may or may not be seriously evaluated. In-depth discussion requires students to present, defend, reformulate, and evaluate their ideas.

Preparation. Thorough teacher preparation is a requirement with any teaching strategy; however, discussion can be much more dependent upon proper preparation than most other methods. Generally, the most critical preparatory steps are to: 1) determine that the discussion format is appropriate for the lesson objectives, 2) structure the session so that it will not evolve

into a teacher-dominated monologue, and 3) insure that all students participate. The first step is generally rather easy. If the instructional objective is to help the students think for themselves, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs, discussion is an appropriate method. It is in step two, structuring the session, that the hard work begins. Ideally, the discussion method of teaching is distinguished by the predominance of student-to-student interaction, with minimum teacher direction and control. Unfortunately, most students are accustomed to passive participation in teacher-dominated classroom situations; therefore, it may be difficult initially to break through that passivity and achieve the desired degree of student participation.

Presentation. For introductory courses, it is generally advisable to begin with a reasonable amount of structure in early discussion sessions and then move toward less structured sessions over the quarter. In all cases, the subject for discussion and the background reading, review, or research assignments should be announced far enough in advance for the students to begin formulating their own ideas on the subject prior to the class session. Once the students are comfortable with this method of learning, the less teacher involvement in a discussion, the better. Less experienced students may require considerable direction to get the discussion started and keep it on the right track.

There are several techniques that may be used to get discussion started. A common method is to ask the students to nominate several topics for discussion, then have them select the ones they want to cover. Another method involves the use of a few

carefully selected open-ended questions to stimulate discussion. Posing a controversy may also initiate student interaction on directed topics.

Teacher role. Ideally, once the discussion starts, you should be able to withdraw to the role of interested observer or, at the most, casual participant. Too frequently, the interchange will simply grind to a halt once you relinquish the lead. This generally indicates one of three things: the students are not prepared, they are not comfortable with the discussion format, or they are simply not conditioned to think for themselves.

Student responsibility. Lack of student preparation can be dealt with by emphasizing that the class will be responsible for the assigned material and then moving on to another subject--but only if the assignment was clearly given and ample time for preparation provided. Widespread student irresponsibility is rare in most classes, and such disciplinary action should not be taken without certain cause. However, it is equally inadvisable to take lack of student preparation lightly. If you should disregard the matter and go ahead and provide the background information, your students may be inclined to take future assignments much less seriously. Building the students' sense of responsibility for the quality of their own education is a vital function of a teacher's role.

Discomfort with the discussion format is a more frequent cause for failure of this instructional strategy. Students who are unsure of their mastery of the subject or uncertain of the teacher's attitude toward speculative thinking may be reluctant to risk embarrassment by speaking out. Emphasize by actions as well

as words that your students are free to express their ideas without fear of ridicule or reprimand. Consistently positive reinforcement of all student responses, whether correct or incorrect, will generally encourage students to speak out and try their ideas. Minimizing your role as a final authority on the issue should also help to facilitate student involvement.

In situations in which students are not conditioned to think for themselves, discussion can be used to help them learn how to think independently. Educators have identified three different stages of discussion which may serve as a guide for leading students through different levels of thinking. Discussion of these three stages follows.

The content stage. This data-level stage of discussion operates at the recall level of thinking. To maintain a student-centered emphasis at this stage, you should avoid using lectures or summary presentations to introduce the class sessions. Rather, during the first session or two, you can solicit factual information from the students about the assigned subject and outline their input on the board for use as a guide for further discussion. To initiate discussion, you will probably need to ask questions about the material on the board. Consequently, most of the initial interaction may be in the form of teacher-student dialogue, but student-student interchange should be encouraged at every opportunity.

Your questions should be designed to require additional information or clarification rather than yes-no responses, and you will probably have to employ all your questioning skills to draw out some of the more reticent students. Questions which require

students to explain relationships among the factual information will help them to develop their conceptual thinking ability. If a student response is incorrect or incomplete, it may be tempting to answer it yourself, but discussion will be encouraged if you rephrase the question and toss it out again.

Questions directed to you should also be redirected to the students whenever possible. If you cannot get an answer from the class within a reasonable time, however, it is generally better to answer the question yourself rather than to force the issue at this stage of discussion.

The comprehension stage. This stage is reached when students begin to expand voluntarily upon, explain, or rephrase important points that have been brought up for discussion. Rephrasing a point increases memory retention, and explaining certainly increases comprehension of the subject. Even if only a few students participate at this level at first, the rest will benefit from hearing their peers' comments. As more and more students begin to think at this level, you should be able to retire to the function of discussion facilitator rather than leader.

Dividing the class into two or more small groups, as class size permits, may greatly enhance student participation if the more active participants are dispersed throughout the groups. In this way, the students will be challenged to conduct the discussion themselves, and you can visit from group to group as is appropriate to arbitrate arguments or help revive floundering discussion. If your direct involvement is required, try to help the students resolve disputes themselves by appeal to the evidence

available to them rather than by declaring the "correct" position yourself.

The analytical/evaluation stage. This stage of discussion involves an advanced level of thinking based on an analysis and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of concepts, theories, techniques, and solutions to problems. This stage of intellectual interchange is more commonly found at the graduate level, but a few of your students may be able to operate at this level.

It is important to remember that such advanced thinkers are generally the exception among introductory students. You may wish to do additional work with them on an individual basis. Care should be taken that advanced students are not restricted to the pace of the rest of the class, but neither should their performance be allowed to eclipse the efforts of the other students in discussion sessions. Under ideal conditions, you may be able to lead many students to this level of discussion; but remember, you will generally have done a commendable job if you bring an introductory class to uniform performance at the comprehensional level.

Classroom seating. Insuring that all students will participate is probably the most difficult task you will face in preparing for a discussion session. Most educators agree that a circular seating arrangement is preferable, since this allows all participants to see and interact with each other. Also, the teacher is removed from a dominant "front and center" position and becomes part of the class, while the more retiring students are brought to the forefront. Sitting around tables is another acceptable arrangement as long as all students can see each other.

The traditional lecture seating arrangement is not conducive to discussion.

Student participation. Special effort may be required to get some of the students to talk--and to get some of the more talkative to stop. In the sixth chapter of The Craft of Teaching (1979), which deals with the advantages and problems of the use of discussion, Eble cautions, "In encouraging reticent students, however, one does not want to exclude the more responsive ones. It is a tricky business" (p. 65). He further advises that, if discussion is going to be used frequently in a class, it may be productive at the outset to spend some time teaching the techniques of good discussion and then have the class itself establish some ground rules for handling the problem. Even with the best of preparation, a discussion session may fail, but the benefits to the students are well worth the risk of trying again.

Student-to-student interaction is essential to the success of the discussion method. If it is necessary for you to participate, you can still preserve the adventure of discovery for the students by participating in the spirit of a learner rather than a teacher. A few expert pronouncements by a teacher can wilt student spontaneity very quickly, but responding with a perceptive question or comment will generally motivate further discussion. Taking care that answers come from the class as much as possible will enhance the students' responsibility for learning and appreciation of their ability to discover new knowledge.

Whenever possible, large discussion groups should be divided into smaller groups. Near the end of the period, the class should be reassembled for a wrap-up session. Brief group

reports can help make the results of each group discussion available to the whole class and will help increase the sense of discovery and cooperative excitement in learning.

Continuous eye contact with students who are speaking will often inhibit discussion; they may suspect that you are going to interrupt or correct them at any time. A good way to prevent this misunderstanding without appearing inattentive is to take casual notes throughout the discussion. To remove possible student anxiety about the note taking, you may explain that the notes will be used in a brief wrap-up session at the end of the class and then use them accordingly to assure the class of your respect for their ideas.

Singling out students with questions may occasionally be necessary to involve the quieter students, but this practice can quickly turn a discussion into a quiz session. Voluntary participation is the key to effective discussion. Jumping into a discussion to break a period of silence or taking over too quickly whenever the discussion wanders will retard the development of student assertiveness and confidence. As much as possible, the direction of the class should come from the students. Disputes can often form the basis for involving the more reticent students. Asking one or two of them to conduct independent research on a disputed issue and report to the class may be just the encouragement they need.

Summation. A brief wrap-up session at the end of the period is highly recommended to help focus student thought. The wrap-up may consist of a simple reiteration of the assigned discussion topic, a summary of the major points raised by the

students, or a review of the concepts developed by the class. In any case, the session should end with a focus on the students' ideas. Give your students confidence in their abilities to think for themselves, and they will appreciate the subject you teach; consequently, the discussion method of teaching is especially effective for improving student attitudes toward a subject.

Quiz Sections and Review Sessions

Many departments with large enrollments in introductory lecture courses break the classes down into one or more quiz or review sections to facilitate the learning of students. Generally, the lectures are given to the whole class by a professor, and the quiz sections are assigned to graduate teaching assistants. In most cases, the lecture professor is responsible for the overall course.

Responsibilities. If your assignment includes a quiz or review section, you may be expected to handle only questions and problems related to materials covered in the lecture, or you may be expected to supplement the lectures with new information. Consequently, before the quarter begins, you should meet with the professor in charge of the lecture sessions to determine what will be expected of you. Specifically, you will need to know whether you will be expected to prepare and give tests in connection with the quiz sections and whether you will assist the professor in grading lecture quizzes and/or term papers. Also, you will need to know if you will be expected to lecture in the absence of the professor. Some departments conduct orientation sessions for GTAs to handle such details prior to the start of a course, but close coordination with the lecture professor will still be essential.

Some professors schedule regular meetings throughout the course to discuss the content and conduct of the course with their GTAs, while others prefer to meet informally to explore problems. In the latter case, it may be beneficial to form a GTA group to meet regularly and exchange ideas. Generally, you will be expected to attend all lectures to insure that you are fully aware of all material presented by the lecturer.

Your job will be to help the students understand and apply the concepts, principles, and/or techniques introduced in the lectures, so you will need to be especially sensitive to students' needs for additional information or clarification. In most cases, you will have one class period to cover the material presented in three or four lectures; consequently, you will need to prepare carefully to conduct the session at a pace and in a manner that will be meaningful to your class. If attendance is voluntary, most of those present will probably be struggling and will need your help with the basics of the course. Conversely, if attendance is mandatory, you will also be challenged to maintain the interest of the more advanced students.

Strategies. As with other instructional responsibilities, the teaching strategies you choose for quiz sections or review sessions will depend upon what is expected of you by your department and for your students. For instance, if you are expected to conduct a summary review of the content of the lectures, you may find the lecture method more suitable; whereas, demonstrations and/or discussions may be more appropriate if you are expected to supplement the lectures with new material. On the other hand, if your responsibility is to conduct a problem-solving

session, you may need to use a combination of demonstrations, questioning techniques, and exercises to help students learn to apply their new knowledge. Any preparation or additional study that is expected of the students in connection with quiz sections should be made explicitly clear.

Student feedback. Although it is always important for the teacher to know whether the students understand the topics covered in a course, feedback is especially critical for a review or quiz section--and the greater your ability to sense the students' needs, the better. If you realize that the students lack the necessary background to understand a topic, you can provide additional basic information. If they are confused because the lectures are not clear, you can review the material and clarify the difficult areas. On the other hand, if they are bored with the lectures, you can provide challenging discussions, examples, demonstrations, or exercises to help them grasp the relevance of the subject matter.

Student feedback is also needed to enable you to keep the lecture professor advised of student progress. You may be able to obtain the required feedback simply by asking the students to identify their needs. After a few sessions, it may also be helpful to circulate a brief questionnaire to the students, asking them to identify any help they need and inviting suggestions for improvement of the course. Share this information with the lecture professor, who may be able to use it to improve the lecture sessions as well as to advise you as to how your quiz sections may best support the overall course objectives. Midterm evaluations are used by several university departments. For more

information on this evaluation technique, contact the Office of Instructional Development.

Finally, quiz sections and review sessions were developed because of a need for student assistance above and beyond that available through the lectures. However, there will probably be some students who need even more assistance; consequently, your accessibility to students on an individual basis and your office location and hours, should be made very clear.

Other Teaching Methods

Although the instructional methods discussed above are the most common, they are only partially representative of the diversity of imaginative teaching approaches used at The University of Georgia. A discussion of the numerous additional methods is beyond the scope of this handbook, but a survey of the faculty in your own department will probably reveal a number of alternative teaching strategies that are successfully employed on a regular basis. Fortunately for your students and for your own

Imaginative and diverse teaching methods are used at The University of Georgia.

professional development, you may soon find yourself intrigued by the possibilities of expanding your personal repertoire to include such instructional methods as modular instruction, docudramas, simulation games, role playing, case studies, field trips, or computer assisted instruction, just to name a few.

Resources. McKeachie discusses the advantages and limitations of several alternative teaching methods in Teaching Tips, and this is also a popular topic in the internship for graduate teaching assistants (GSC 777), conducted by the Office of Instructional Development. The teaching journals in your field are additional sources of information regarding imaginative teaching techniques. If your class needs livening up, it will be well worth your time to review these references for new ideas.

Your faculty supervisor is a ready reference regarding the compatibility of the various teaching techniques with the department's instructional objectives. Prior to planning or scheduling events such as field trips, you should check with your supervisor or department head for information on University and departmental regulations regarding costs, scheduling, and liability.

Chapter Four, which follows, is of special interest to GTAs who are assigned instructional responsibilities in laboratory settings.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHING IN THE LABORATORY SETTING

Graduate assistants who are assigned to teaching responsibilities in laboratory settings have special responsibilities for planning, teaching, and evaluation. For those involved in science laboratory instruction, student safety is an important concern.

Science Laboratory Sections

Purpose of Laboratory Sections

In most introductory science courses, laboratory sections are conducted in conjunction with lecture sessions to give the students an opportunity for hands-on experience with the scientific method. Generally, the lectures are conducted by professors, with GTAs responsible for conducting the laboratory sessions. In situations involving several laboratory sections for large lecture courses, a faculty supervisor may be assigned to

Laboratory sections are conducted in conjunction with lecture sessions to give students an opportunity for hands-on experience with the scientific method.

oversee all teaching assistants. In other cases, GTAs may be assigned to assist specific professors. In any case, departmental expectations and procedures for laboratory courses are generally well established, and close contact between GTAs and their supervisors is essential to the realization of the department's objectives.

Laboratory sessions provide an excellent opportunity for students to acquire valuable technical skills and expand their understanding of the relation of scientific concepts and theories to "the real world." This practical experience is also intended to nurture the students' spirit of inquiry and to generate an appreciation of the nature of scientific discovery. To provide the extended time needed for the uninterrupted conduct of experiments, the lab sessions are usually longer and less frequent than regular class sessions, and students usually work individually or in small groups.

Planning for Laboratory Safety

Laboratory sessions present a unique responsibility for student safety. The common safety precautions for laboratory operation may be second nature to the teacher, but the students are much less experienced and need close supervision, especially in the first weeks of the course. If improperly performed, simple procedures, such as inserting glass tubes into rubber stoppers or the decantation of toxic, volatile, or corrosive liquids, can produce serious injury. Consequently, to insure student safety, thorough instruction and frequent reminders of the necessary safety techniques must be primary objectives of every laboratory session.

If your assignment involves laboratory teaching, you should review the following information carefully and contact your faculty supervisor or departmental safety officer to obtain complete information about your responsibility for the safe conduct of your classes.

Guidelines for general laboratory safety are published in the Laboratory Safety Manual, distributed by the UGA Public Safety Division, Environmental Safety Services Department. Additional safety standards for the operation of laboratories involving specific potential hazards, such as the use of biohazardous agents and radiation, are published under separate cover. The Environmental Safety Services Department advises that the Laboratory Safety Manual covers the type of information needed for most laboratory teaching operations but that a teaching assistant should check carefully to determine if any portion of the course will involve operations to which specific regulations apply. Information regarding the application of specific safety regulations and copies of the regulations may be obtained from your department's safety officer or the Environmental Safety Services Department.

The safety manual includes a set of general laboratory rules followed by indexed chapters containing guidelines for chemical storage; the uses and storage of compressed gases; the handling and disposal of chemical carcinogens; the installation, classification, and use of fume hoods; waste disposal; emergency fire procedures; and first aid and accident reporting. Waste disposal instructions and information regarding incompatible chemicals, specific chemical hazards, chemical spill procedures,

and a list of chemical carcinogens are included in the appendices along with an explanation of the University's system of laboratory hazard warning signs.

The introduction to the guidelines for general laboratory safety states that: "...the basic purpose of laboratory safety is to protect the student, researcher, staff member, or instructor from the many real and potential hazards encountered when using various materials in a laboratory setting. These hazards can be eliminated or reduced by adoption of a series of common sense rules tailored to the specific needs of the individual laboratory." The introduction continues that "...it is up to the principal investigator (faculty member in charge of the laboratory) or instructor to establish and enforce a set of rules tailored to the instructor safety requirements of the laboratory in question." The Safety Officer also advises that it is the responsibility of the investigator in charge of a research laboratory or the instructor in charge of a laboratory course to determine that hazard warning signs have been posted or to obtain the signs and post them on the laboratory doors. These signs are available from Environmental Safety Services. A teaching assistant serving as an instructor in a laboratory section or course should check with his/her faculty supervisor or other appropriate officials to insure compliance with this rule.

The safety rules also require the use of safety goggles, face shields, and body shields if there is any possibility of a violent reaction in the laboratory. The general laboratory rules state: "It is the responsibility of the senior faculty member in charge to see that necessary safety equipment is available and

used as required." According to the safety officer, a teaching assistant in charge of a laboratory class shares this responsibility with the senior faculty member and should immediately report any problems to his or her supervisor, who should report the problem to the safety officer.

The chemical safety guidelines state: "When employing laboratory chemicals, it is the user's responsibility to know what protective steps must be taken for all materials used (and what emergency equipment and supplies are available and how to use them) in case of a chemical reaction or accident. Do not proceed with any project until this information has been obtained." Teaching assistants should make sure that all students receive sufficient instruction for safe use of chemicals or potentially hazardous laboratory equipment, whether in the form of written safety guides, pre-laboratory lectures, teacher-demonstration, or otherwise, prior to the beginning of the laboratory exercise.

The Environmental Safety Services Officer has advised that the faculty supervisor in charge of a course generally has overall responsibility for laboratory safety, but this becomes a shared responsibility with a teaching assistant whenever the responsibility for the conduct of a laboratory teaching session is delegated to an assistant. Consequently, the teaching assistant who conducts a laboratory session is responsible for proper safety precautions in the conduct of that session. Several science departments have departmental safety coordinators and provide mandatory laboratory-safety courses or seminars for GTAs who will be instructing in situations that may involve chemical or biological hazards. If your teaching assignment involves

potential laboratory hazards and there is no safety training available through your department, you should contact your supervisor to arrange for group training in laboratory safety provided by Environmental Safety Services.

Any accident that occurs in the laboratory should be reported to your supervisor, and accidents involving injury to persons should be reported to Environmental Safety Services on a "Faculty/Staff Accident Report" form, which is available from Environmental Safety Services. The safety officer has advised that it is a good policy to file a report of any accident, no matter how minor, that involves injury to anyone. In the case of a large chemical spill or other emergency situations beyond the instructor's capability to handle, the instructor should immediately notify the Environmental Safety Emergency Response Team at 542-5801 during normal working hours or the UGA Police at 542-2200 after normal working hours.

Additional Responsibilities in the Laboratory

Laboratory classes are often expensive for the department (because of space and equipment costs) and time consuming for the students. Although the teaching demands vary greatly among the laboratories in the various science disciplines, the following general suggestions may help new teaching assistants to provide for the effectiveness of laboratory sessions.

Learn all you can about the University's current safety regulations and procedures before classes begin. Be sure the first aid kit, fire extinguisher, and other safety equipment are accessible, properly labeled, and fully operable--and be sure you

know how to use them. Review the basic rules for first aid and post in a conspicuous place the procedure for obtaining emergency assistance.

Check out the laboratory area and equipment so you can feel comfortable when classes begin. Become familiar with the laboratory stockroom so you will be able to locate extra supplies and equipment quickly if they are needed during a class session. Obtain a copy of the required student manual, review the supplies needed for the scheduled experiments, and notify the faculty supervisor if there are any shortages. Check with your supervisor regarding the availability of written materials, procedures and demonstration supplies (audiovisuals, slides, charts, and so forth) that you may need throughout the course.

The First Day of Class

As in other kinds of instruction, this is the time to set the tone for the rest of the quarter. Explain the importance of laboratory safety and make sure the students know what to do in the event of an emergency. Show them the laboratory facilities and give them a few minutes to become familiar with their surroundings. Then, explain in detail the general ground rules for the proper handling and storage of supplies and equipment. Emphasize that because the laboratory must be used by subsequent classes, work areas must be cleared and all equipment cleaned and stored before the end of each session.

Explain the relationship of the laboratory section to the overall course and point out that most of the experiments performed in introductory science courses are intended to

illustrate basic ideas that underlie the fundamental concepts of science. Briefly review the types of experiments the students will be peforming. Emphasize that because it will generally be necessary for you to present essential information and instructions at the beginning of each session they should be sure to arrive for class on time.

Identify the name and source of the manuals and supplies the students will be expected to purchase and explain the general type of preparation required for each session. Review the overall grading policy you will use and discuss your expectations regarding independent and collaborative work. Explain the types of notes and reports the students will be expected to prepare and, finally, make the assignment for the next laboratory session. If the work is to be done in pairs or small groups, it may be facilitative to arrange the groups at this time.

Instruction in the Course

Maintain student awareness of the educational importance of the laboratory experience by explaining the purpose of each experiment. Advance reading assignments or very brief introductory comments regarding the significance of an experiment may generate greater awareness of the nature of scientific research, and a few carefully selected study questions may help to focus student thinking. Unfortunately, laboratory experiments have occasionally been misperceived as irrelevant "busy-work," but proper student orientation and imaginative teaching can turn a laboratory exercise into an exciting and challenging learning experience.

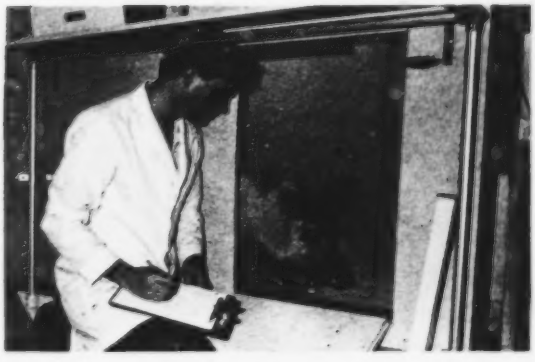
Thorough teacher preparation is vital to each lab session. It is strongly recommended that you perform each assigned experiment, including the calculations and reporting that will later be expected of the students, before the laboratory session to determine if the instructions in the student manual are complete and clear and to be sure that the exercise can be performed in the time provided. This practice will also help you to discover those procedural difficulties the students are most likely to encounter. The theory on which the experiment is based should be reviewed in detail in preparation for responding to student questions regarding the theoretical significance and practical applicability of their newfound knowledge.

Because of the nature of laboratory instruction, it is very important to begin each session promptly. At the beginning of each session, demonstrate how the students should handle and care for any new supplies and equipment they will be using and review the essential safety precautions. Briefly but explicitly explain the purpose of the experiment, then give your students any necessary final instructions and let them get started. The introductory comments should be kept to a minimum to allow as much class time as possible for the experiment. Otherwise, the pressure of time may reduce a meaningful learning experience to an exercise in futility. In many cases, the instructions and the next class assignment can be written on the board before the session to greatly reduce the time needed for teacher comments.

During lab sessions you will have an opportunity for a unique involvement with student learning on a one-to-one basis. By circulating around the laboratory, you will be able to

demonstrate your interest and accessibility to those students who may need help, while simultaneously monitoring laboratory safety. Care should be given to maintaining an informal manner while moving around the room. Regular pacing may be perceived as inspection tours; conversely, hovering in one place may be intimidating to the students in that area. Few teaching situations are as amenable as laboratory sessions to developing a personal rapport with students. So, with a little effort, you should be able to establish quickly an enjoyable working atmosphere.

At times, it may be tempting to take over and help a struggling student through a difficult part of an experiment, but this is generally inadvisable--except to avoid an impending problem. Students are generally more appreciative of assistance if it helps them discover solutions through their own resourcefulness. Questioning techniques are very effective for helping students redirect their thoughts and, if used skillfully, will generate creative thinking ability. So, if you can maintain



Lab sessions provide unique opportunities for student learning.

your patience and diplomacy during your students' plodding efforts to learn by experimentation, teaching can be especially rewarding to both teacher and student.

Near the end of the class session, a brief summarizing discussion of the experimental results can be very productive. Allowing students to explain what transpired will help them to understand how to generalize from the experimental data to the concept under investigation. As the students discuss comparative variations in laboratory data, they may also gain additional insight into the nature of scientific knowledge and learn to appreciate their own abilities to apply experimental methods. The summary sessions will also provide you an opportunity to obtain group feedback regarding the lab procedures and practice.

Language Laboratories

Language laboratories are invaluable learning settings for introductory students of modern foreign languages, and graduate teaching assistants may be assigned to supervise the laboratories and assist students as needed. Although language laboratory teaching is not the same as that discussed above, there are several essential commonalities regarding teacher performance: reliability and punctuality, accessibility to the students, and familiarity with the laboratory equipment.

In language laboratories two of the most important teacher characteristics are accessibility and a demonstrated willingness to help students since many students, especially first-quarter freshmen, may be reluctant to seek out assistance on their own. Encountering a foreign language for the first time can be a

bewildering experience, and difficulties with strange laboratory equipment and procedures can be very intimidating to an uncertain student.

Although students are generally expected to work independently in language laboratories, any assistance you can give a confused student during the first few sessions will help to generate self-confidence and create an appreciation of the value of the laboratory experience. Teacher sensitivity to individual needs and differences in such instructional situations can make the difference between a student's decision to withdraw or to persevere in the course. Consequently, the effective supervision of language laboratories is of paramount importance to the department's success in language courses and perhaps to the entire academic career of many talented students.

The next chapter will be concerned with the evaluation of student progress.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDENT EVALUATION

One of the most challenging steps in your teaching responsibilities is the evaluation of student progress. Evaluation can also be one of the most threatening steps for the inexperienced teacher. Planning for student evaluation is a integral part of planning for teaching, not just the final step in the instructional process. This chapter covers general principles of evaluation and introduces a variety of ways of evaluating student learning.

Monitoring Student Progress

Most teaching assistants are responsible for evaluating student performance at some point in a course and for assigning final grades as well. Depending on your department's policies and the nature of your assignment, your responsibilities may vary from serving as proctor for standardized departmental examinations to the developing, administering, and grading of all evaluative activities for a course. Regardless of how you may be involved in teaching, however, you will ultimately be involved in the process of evaluating student performance. Evaluation is essential to the business of teaching.

In addition to the assignment of final grades, techniques used for monitoring student progress may serve another important function--course improvement. Administering and grading several tests, quizzes, exams, or surveys may be time consuming; but each student evaluation is a barometer of the effectiveness of the instruction. If a test given early in a course should reveal

generally poor student performance, the teacher would still have time to take remedial action. This opportunity for instructional improvement is lost to the teacher whose only student feedback is from a final examination.

As McKeachie (1986) points out, a test may be an efficient vehicle for student-teacher feedback or a counterproductive source of student stress. If you will use tests, quizzes, written assignments, and other measures to monitor student progress, let the class know from the start the type of testing you will use, how much the individual test grades will count on their final grade, whether you will permit make-up tests or accept late papers, and whether you will count other factors, such as attendance and class participation, in assigning grades. Generally, if you let the students know what is expected of them and why it is important to their academic progress, they will become partners with you in your efforts toward effective student learning.

The problems and procedures of testing and grading are discussed in detail by McKeachie in Chapters Eight and Nine of Teaching Tips (1986) and by Eble in Chapters Eleven and Twelve of The Craft of Teaching (1979). Consultation on test development may be obtained on campus from the Office of Instructional Development. Testing and grading are also covered in the internship for graduate teaching assistants (GSC 777), which is conducted for the Graduate School by the Office of Instructional Development. Experienced teachers in your department are also excellent sources of information regarding effective testing techniques for the subject you teach. You are strongly encouraged

to seek expert information on student evaluation from the resources listed above. In the meantime, the following summary suggestions may be helpful to you in monitoring the progress of your students.

Purposes of Testing

Tests are generally employed for three purposes: diagnostic, to find out what the students already know; formative, to give students feedback and improve instruction; and summative, to evaluate student performance for the purpose of assigning a final grade. In most introductory courses at The University of Georgia, several tests are administered during the course, followed by a final examination. Diagnostic and formative testing are used infrequently for introductory courses.

Test Development

Test development should generally begin with the delineation of the course objectives and the determination of what you will expect the students to know at various points in the course. Having first defined the scope of the test, the next step is to decide the kind of instrument that will best measure student progress. Traditionally, you have a choice of an objective test (true-false, matching, multiple choice, or short answer), an essay or discussion test, or a combination of both. The nature of the subject and your personal teaching philosophy will usually determine which format is most appropriate.

For instance, if the course has focused on facts, data, and procedures you wish the student to remember, an objective test would probably be more appropriate. On the other hand, if you

wish to measure the students' ability to organize, synthesize, or apply the knowledge they have gained, an essay test, problem-solving project, or written assignment might be more suitable.

Format. To decide upon a format, it may be helpful to write down all the topics you wish to test under each course objective and then classify the topics according to importance. Next, outline the questions you want to ask on each topic, keeping in mind that the more important topics deserve the most attention. Beside each question, indicate whether it will require the students to recall facts, understand or explain a concept, or apply knowledge. If the majority of the questions will require the recall of course content, an objective test is probably indicated. If most questions will require an explanation or application of a concept, an essay format or problem-solving context may be needed. Likewise, the nature of the questions may require a combination of approaches.

Design. The next step is to write the test items and arrange them in the order you want the items included in the test. If you use discussion or essay questions, the task of test development generally takes less time; but be sure to allow sufficient time to grade the papers. Conversely, objective tests require much more time and skill to prepare but are much easier to grade. Once the test is designed, it should be carefully reviewed to see if it is valid, meaningful, and reasonable in length and difficulty. A trivial test can be dispiriting to a conscientious student, and a test that is too difficult or too long for the allotted time can be very discouraging for the entire class.

As McKeachie notes in Teaching Tips (1986), "...tests are among the most frustrating aspects of the course to many students, and usually arouse a great deal of overt and covert agression" (p. 86). Your testing skills are important to your teaching success; therefore, you are encouraged to take advantage of all available resources for insight into effective test development and administration. In the meantime, the following general information on test construction may be helpful.

Test attributes. A properly developed test should possess each of the following attributes.

1. Validity. The test should elicit responses that will indicate knowledge and understanding of what you wanted the students to learn.

2. Specificity. The test should address the specific topics covered in the course.

3. Balance. The test should emphasize the course material in proportion to the amount of attention given the material in class and assignments.

4. Efficiency. The design of the test should enable students to respond to a sufficient number of items in the allotted time to allow you to assess student mastery of the subject matter.

The test form. In addition to the test questions, the test form should include a place for the student's name, the date of the test, and complete directions for each type of question. The total time allotted for the test and the grading weight of each segment of the test should also be included. If possible, a variety of question types should be used, with directions for test items being clearly stated so there can be no confusion regarding what you expect of the students. To help reduce student anxiety, the test should begin with some of the easier questions. If the students are overwhelmed by the test at the beginning, the test is not likely to be a dependable measure of student ability.

Types of Testing

Discussion and Essay Questions

Discussion and essay questions may be very effective for measuring students' thinking ability. These types of questions should be used if you wish to solicit responses indicating a broad, general understanding of major concepts or principles. The questions should leave sufficient latitude for creative thinking; and, whenever possible, the criteria for evaluation of the responses should be specified. For instance, when you assess the ability of the students to relate a specific concept or principle to other topics covered in the course, this should be indicated on the test form. The criteria for grading an essay or discussion question should be established ahead of time to insure that the test question is stated in a manner that will let the student know how you expect the question to be treated. The use of discussion essay questions tends to be low in objectivity and reliability and requires much time and skill to grade; therefore, essay tests are generally more applicable to small class situations.

Short Answer Items

Short answer questions allow specificity and scope in testing, while still providing an opportunity for student creativity. In a typical test period usually only two or three essay questions can be handled effectively. During the same period, eight or ten short answer questions may be used to cover a broader variety of topics. By using a format that allows a limited space for answers, students may be encouraged to be concise and precise in their responses. If the questions are

clear and specific, it is usually rather easy to determine whether a student's response is acceptable. Short answer tests may be made as challenging and as thorough as you wish. For instance, a question may require students to outline the key components of a concept or principle, list pertinent facts, solve a problem, diagnose an issue, or propose a hypothesis. As with essay questions, care must be taken to make sure that the short answer questions are clearly related to major topic areas. The criteria for grading each question should be established ahead of time to help insure that the questions are stated clearly.

Objective Questions

Objective questions generally possess a higher degree of objectivity and reliability, if properly prepared, and are more efficient for testing large classes or large units of material. Although much easier to grade than essay or short answer questions, objective questions require much more time and skill for development and may allow more opportunity for student guessing. Completion, multiple choice, matching, and true-false questions are the most common types of objective test items.

Completion items. Completion questions are composed of sentences in which key words or very short phrases have been left blank for students to complete. If too many words are left blank or if omitted phrases are too lengthy, the question will become vague and imprecise and, therefore, valueless for evaluation purposes. To avoid prompting the students, all blanks should be of the same length, and articles such as "a" or "an" in front of blanks should be avoided or written as "a/an." Completion questions composed of standard definitions or statements copied

directly from the textbook are sometimes used to insure that the questions are clearly related to the subject matter, but such test items may measure only the ability to memorize factual material. Therefore, carefully developed, original statements may be more desirable since they will generally require more student thought and understanding.

Multiple choice items. Multiple choice tests are very versatile and may be especially useful for testing the ability to interpret diagrams, sketches, tables, graphs, and related material. This type of test is also very easy to grade and is frequently used for testing very large classes. However, it can be very difficult and time consuming to develop a sufficient number of good, inclusive multiple choice items. Therefore, other types of test questions may be more efficient for small classes. Teachers' manuals which accompany textbooks sometimes contain acceptable, ready-made multiple choice test questions.

Each multiple choice item should consist of two parts: a stem (consisting of a clear, complete, thought, or problem which may be presented as a sentence, a question, or an incomplete statement lacking one or a few words) and a set of optional answers (containing the correct answer plus several distractors). Like the stem, the options should be clear and concise, and the distractors (incorrect answers) generally should include common misconceptions, true statements that are in the wrong context for the queston, and incorrect answers that might sound plausible to naive students. Three to five optional answers per question, with the correct answer randomly located among the distractors, are generally used. The options should be as nearly equal in length

and style as possible. Also, the tenses of the stem and all options should be consistent, and the options should be written in terms familiar to the class to reduce the possibility of revealing the correct answer. To reduce student frustration, options such as "none of the above" or "all of the above" should be used sparingly. A list of pertinent problems, rules, and recommendations regarding multiple choice test construction can be found in Teaching Tips (1986).

Matching items. Matching questions are an efficient means of testing for recognition of key information and are relatively easy to both construct and grade. However, they are generally ineffective for testing recall, skills development, or understanding. Matching questions are usually composed of a list of stems and an equal or greater list of optional answers to be matched to the stems. The stems may be complete sentences; definitions; short phrases; or single words, such as the name of a major concept, geographic location, or philosophic or scientific principle. The options may be single words or definitional phrases. All options and stems should be of the same tense, and all options should be plausible. Thorough instructions must be given regarding such matters as how many times an option may be used and the basis on which items are to be matched. Generally, matching questions are more effective when used in sets of five to ten items related to the same topic, using as many sets of questions as there are topics to be tested.

True-false items. True-false tests are rather easy to construct and very easy to grade, but they are not generally recommended as a dependable means for measuring student

performance. If properly developed, however, true-false test items may be useful to test factual recall. To avoid creating student frustration, tricky questions and double negatives should be avoided; and all statements should be definitely correct or incorrect to avoid ambiguity. Clues such as "all," "always," and "never" (which are often associated with false statements) and "possible," "sometimes" or "generally" (which are often associated with true statements) should be avoided.

Test Administration

Administering a test is usually a simple matter; nevertheless, there are several pitfalls that you should make every effort to avoid. For instance, if yours is a very large class, you may need to obtain assistance in handing out the test forms; otherwise, the students you reach last may be penalized. Also, if several pages of test materials are involved, much confusion and wasted time can be avoided simply by collating the materials and handing them out as a unit. Be sure to have more copies of the test than you expect to need.

Testing is a tense time for most students, and any effort you can extend to make the process run smoothly and minimize interruptions will generally be reflected in improved student morale and performance. For instance, writing announcements, corrections, or further instructions on the chalkboard will make the information available to all students (except those who are visually handicapped) and will prevent the need for distracting announcements during the test. Of course, it is necessary to let the students know ahead of time that you will follow this

procedure. Some teachers also write the amount of time remaining for the test on the chalkboard, in ten or fifteen minute increments. The most pertinent precaution of all is proper preparation. If the test is well constructed, contains clear, adequate instructions, and is ready to distribute the moment the test period starts, you should generally have no trouble with student attitude.

Fostering Academic Honesty

Cheating is an ever present problem. In Teaching Tips (1986), McKeachie suggests several preventive measures that may help reduce the possibility of cheating. First, he recommends reducing the pressure on the students by providing a number of opportunities for them to demonstrate their progress rather than relying on one examination grade. Second, he suggests letting the students help develop class norms supporting honesty. Many students would rather not cheat but feel threatened if they think other students are cheating and thereby getting better grades. McKeachie frequently allows his students to vote beforehand on whether a test would be conducted on the honor system. Unless the vote is unanimous, the test is proctored.

The majority of McKeachie's classes vote against the honor system; and, he concludes, the stress that leads students to cheat is reduced when a test is proctored and administered well. Some feel that cheating is common in colleges because of the heavy emphasis on grades. Evidence that a teacher cares enough to try to prevent cheating can be one of the most effective deterrents to academic dishonesty.

Academic honesty and relevant related policies are discussed in fuller detail in Chapter Six of this handbook.

Purposes of Grading

The basic functions of grading are threefold: to measure student learning, to assess teacher effectiveness, and to provide feedback to students. Grades are relative indicators of how well students have done in a particular class; however, when reviewed in later years by graduate schools or potential employees, they are often interpreted as absolute indicators of how much learning actually took place. Consequently, grades are a major source of student anxiety and may actually inhibit learning, especially if the students become preoccupied with studying for a test grade rather than for comprehensive knowledge of the course material.

Despite the distress they may cause, grades can be educationally productive if: a) the students know what is expected of them from the start; b) evaluations are well constructed, balanced, and clearly presented; c) equitable and reasonable grading procedures are used; and d) adequate feedback is provided to the students. It is important to keep the class as informed as possible regarding your grading criteria and to develop and use fair and defensible grading practices. The following general suggestions may help in your efforts to develop a dependable grading strategy.

Evaluation Procedures

The overall evaluation procedures should be determined during the planning stages of the course. If you are assisting with a class, check with the course professor to decide how you

will be involved in grading student work. If you are in charge of a course, decide how you will test student progress, the grading standards you will use, and how much each test will count toward the final grade. Also, establish your policies for handling missed tests, retesting in case of poor performance, and late assignments. Next, list all other factors that will be considered in assigning a final grade. Once all these factors are explicit, they should be included in the course syllabus or otherwise made known to the class. Simply discussing your goals for evaluation with the students and telling them why you feel the goals are reasonable and important to their academic progress will prevent many problems related to testing and grading.

Grades are usually determined by comparison of student performance with absolute standards, the performance of other students, or a combination of the two. In general, grading by absolute standards is employed in very small classes or in cases in which the teacher has complete confidence in the established standards for performance and is experienced in developing tests. However, even the most experienced teachers may sometimes establish unrealistic standards, and grading must then be tempered with relative interpretations of student performance. For instance, if everyone in a class fails a test, the test may have been too difficult, or poorly presented, or the standards for grading may have been unrealistically high. Conversely, if everyone makes an "A," the test was probably too easy or otherwise unreliable for differentiating performance. Fair and defensible grading standards are those which will assign top grades to excellent students and reasonably lower grades for poorer performance.

Grading by comparison with other students in the class, or grading "on a curve," is generally used when a teacher either feels that it is important for students to know how their performance compares with their peers or is uncertain of what the absolute standards of performance should be. This method of grading is also used by teachers who wish to limit the percentage of students who may receive "As," "Bs," and so forth.

Policies, procedures, and requirements. Policies, procedures, and requirements for testing and grading may differ from department to department; but The University of Georgia prescribes a uniform grading scale and grade symbols for assigning final student grades. Information on the uniform grading system is presented in Chapter Seven of this handbook. Discussions with your supervisor and other teachers in your department should produce useful information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the different standards for grading. In the meantime, the following suggestions may help you to start developing your own grading practices.

Grading Practices

Grading objective tests. These tests are generally rather simple to grade. An answer key should be prepared, with the point values assigned to each answer, before you begin to grade the papers. Also, each question should be rechecked to see if more than one response is acceptable and the answer key modified as indicated. If in the process of grading papers, you discover that an inordinately large number of students perform poorly on a particular question, the question should be carefully examined to

see if it is unclear or otherwise unsuitable as a test item. If it is unsuitable, it may be eliminated simply by giving everyone credit for a correct answer. Once the answers have been checked, it is generally a simple matter to calculate a grade for an objective test from a tally of the correct responses.

Grading essay, discussion and short-answer tests. These types of tests are more complex. It is usually helpful to prepare a model answer or content outline for each acceptable response to each question. However, in cases of very general essay questions or questions requiring creative thinking, it may be impossible to prepare a comprehensive or "model" answer. Careful attention should be given to developing grading standards that will both accommodate the diversity of student thinking and minimize the subjective imposition of the teacher's own attitudes and opinions upon otherwise acceptable responses. Uniformity in grading can usually be enhanced by reading and grading all student responses to one question prior to grading the next question on each paper.

Teacher feedback. The grading of essay and discussion questions provides an excellent opportunity for feedback through marginal comments, recommendations for further study, and the posing of alternate points of view. It can be very discouraging for struggling students who have made their best efforts on a test to have an answer marked "wrong" with little or no explanation or suggestion to improve their future efforts. Likewise, students may be overwhelmed by criticism. It is generally more constructive to be as positive as possible in evaluative comments. Even the weakest test paper will have some strong points on which positive comments may be made, and criticism of weaknesses

tempered by selective acknowledgment of accomplishments will often stimulate further achievement. Although a sense of humor is an invaluable asset in teaching, attempts at wit or irony on test feedback are sometimes misinterpreted as ridicule and should therefore be used with caution.

Post-test procedures. To maximize the educational benefits of a test, the papers should be graded and returned as soon as possible; and the answer key or model answers should be posted for student reference. An opportunity should be provided for the class to discuss the test. If the test is still fresh on the students' minds, your comments are much more likely to produce learning. Such discussions also may lead to peer comments that will help to soften the impact of your written criticisms upon sensitive students. Post-test class discussions may bring new ideas or alternative answers to light that will challenge some of your grading standards. If handled positively, such occasions are opportunities for learning for both students and teacher. Also, your willingness to award credit for acceptable alternative

If handled positively, evaluation offers opportunities for learning for both students and teacher.

answers will reassure your students of your respect for their individual scholastic abilities.

To protect students' rights to privacy, grades should not be posted nor papers returned in a manner in which the performance of an individual student may be recognized by others. The grade for each paper should also be rechecked for accuracy before the tests are returned. An accurate, confidential record of the grades should be maintained for final evaluation purposes and possible future reference.

Because of the pressure for grades discussed earlier, sometimes students will contest a grade. Inordinate requests to reconsider grades may be minimized by emphasizing from the start that you are willing to regrade papers whenever a student feels it is justified, but that you reserve the right to adjust the grade either up or down. If no resolution of a contested grade is possible and a student feels her or his rights have been violated by a teacher's grading practices, the student may consider initiating a grievance through the Office of Judicial Programs. Equitable grading practices, accurate records of student evaluations, and operation within established University and departmental policies and procedures should minimize the likelihood of problems of this nature.

Term Papers and Projects

Because of the size of many introductory courses, term papers and projects are more commonly associated with student evaluation in upper-level courses. (The experience of grading forty or more term papers and essay style final exams during

examination week has made many teachers into proponents of more efficient evaluation methods). However, term papers and term project assignments are excellent ways to encourage students to organize the material and draw their own conclusions and, with proper planning, may be used even in large classes. For example, requiring your students to limit the length of their papers will encourage them to distill their thoughts and will lessen your reading load. Also, your work load can be equalized by requiring that the papers be turned in prior to the end of the quarter, preferably early enough for you to grade them before you have to begin grading final exams. Papers should not, however, be due so early that students do not have sufficient time to build on the knowledge they gain in the latter part of the course. This can be an especially important consideration for you since, as both a teacher and graduate student, you will also be concerned with your own end-of-quarter deadlines.

Writing Assignments

For most of your students, a writing assignment may be an intimidating new experience; therefore, it is important to make the assignment clear, especially for freshman classes. When topics are assigned, they should be worded clearly and succinctly. If the topics are to be chosen by the students, you will need to establish sufficient guidelines to make sure the papers will relate to the overall course objectives. Your grading criteria and policies on plagiarism should also be made clear at the time of the assignment. It may be helpful to distribute an assignment sheet which includes the date the assignment is due and the

penalty for turning in late papers. Generally, the more thorough your planning at the assignment stage, the more beneficial a writing assignment will be for your students.

Written assignments may require students to use only the materials covered in the course, or they may require the students to do independent research beyond the required course readings. The first type of assignment is useful to help students learn to organize course materials and to think independently. The research paper, which is more commonly used in upper level courses, will help students learn to discover their own sources of information. Either type of assignment is compatible with both teacher-assigned or student-selected topics. The type of written assignment you choose should be governed primarily by the level of the class and your goals for the course.

Writing Problems

If you are a teaching assistant in a subject such as language or literature, you will be acutely aware of the common writing problems that students face and are probably uniquely qualified to provide guidance. Otherwise, your sensitivity to your students' needs in this area may be dependent entirely upon your own recall of the mechanical and organizational problems and the writing anxiety you encountered with your first term paper. If you are in the latter category, the following general information may be useful as you attempt to help students.

Mechanical problems. Punctuation, spelling, and grammar are the most common mechanical problems. Unless the course objectives specifically provide for developing writing

proficiency, your grading of written assignments will be based primarily on content and mastery of the material. Effective communication is an essential factor in any subject, however, and helping students learn to communicate is an important part of every teacher's responsibility. Since errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar may seriously affect the meaning of an essay and will detract from the credibility of the writer in the mind of a discerning reader, it should be made clear to the students that mechanical errors will adversely affect their grades.

Organizational problems. Organizational difficulties may also be a serious problem, even for those students possessing a perfect command of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Problems in organization may be dealt with more easily at the time you give an assignment by clarifying your expectations regarding organization and content. It may be helpful to prepare a brief handout including suggestions as to the type of information that should be included in the introduction, how the body of the essay could be constructed, and how to develop a meaningful conclusion. Examples of well-written papers from your discipline may also help your students to grasp the characteristics of good organization.

Preventing problems. Devoting part of a class period to a discussion of composition and having the students review their papers with you at various stages of completion may also forestall major problems. No matter how important a student's ideas may be, they can be rendered invalid by careless, incoherent writing; consequently, anything you can do to help your students to express themselves better will constitute a major contribution to their education. Because of time constraints, you may be unable to deal

with many problems; fortunately, however, you may refer your students to other campus resources for assistance. The Department of English maintains a composition clinic, which is open to all students at specified hours throughout the week. A variety of instructional services, ranging from orientation in library usage to term paper workshops, is offered by the University Libraries throughout the academic year.

Having to submit one's ideas to another for criticism can be a threatening experience for even the most capable student. Therefore, any effort you can make to reassure your students that you will approach the evaluation of their essays from a positive perspective should help to enhance student morale and challenge the class to put their best ideas forward. Experienced educators advise that it is also extremely important for students to understand that criticism of a paper should not be misconstrued as criticism of the person who wrote it but should rather be taken as helpful suggestions for further improvement.

Grading Papers

Schedule plenty of time to grade the papers. Few experiences can be more disappointing to serious students who have done their best than to have a paper returned with a cursory evaluation such as "great paper - A" or "more detail needed - B." Likewise, few experiences can be as difficult for a conscientious teacher as trying to give a large number of papers a fair reading while facing an immediate deadline. Limited time need not prohibit a meaningful response to student writings, however, if you will remember the following suggestions. First, check or

underline the most cogent comments and the more shallow points or erroneous information as you read the paper. After completing the reading, write brief marginal comments complimenting the strong points and correcting errors. Then, make recommendations for further thought or study. Next, include any comprehensive evaluative comments at the end of the paper. Generally, papers are graded on three criteria--content, organization, and presentaton; and it is often helpful to a student's future writing efforts if you will make constructive comments regarding each of these areas.

Finally, fight the tendency to become more callous or less discerning as you approach the bottom of the stack of papers. If you get tired or bored, stop grading and give yourself a break. Grading written assignments requires time, work, and judgment. With careful attention to the need to schedule ample time for reading and grading your students' work, you should be able to give each paper the fair evaluation it deserves.

Other Evaluative Criteria

The evaluation procedures discussed above have focused on the traditional forms of written assignments and grading standards that are commonly used to monitor student progress. In some courses, especially those involving laboratory sections, student progress may be monitored totally or in part through the regular review of worksheets or laboratory reports. A variety of innovative evaluation criteria, such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, computerized testing, and so forth, have also been employed successfully. If you are interested in investigating

some of the alternate forms of student evaluation, you should check with your supervisor for suggestions and information regarding the compatibility of the various methods with your department's policies and goals. The Office of Instructional Development is also available to assist you with instructional concerns.

The following chapter addresses special situations which may arise in the classroom.

Innovative evaluation methods, such as computerized testing, may also be successfully employed.

CHAPTER SIX

SPECIAL TEACHING SITUATIONS

Discussion or even enumeration of the unique teaching situations which may be encountered at The University of Georgia is beyond the scope of this handbook, but brief reviews of a few of the more commonly recurring situations follow. While clear University or departmental policies exist for the handling of many situations, others must be handled with professional discretion on an individual basis.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty or cheating is an unfortunate problem on university campuses. There is, however, much a careful teacher can do to create a learning environment which fosters student honesty and integrity.

Copying another student's paper is one of the most prevalent forms of cheating. To prevent this situation, McKeachie (1986) suggests using alternate seating patterns if classroom space permits; otherwise, alternate test forms may be used. If copying is suspected, however, it is advisable to proceed with caution. For instance, what at first appears to be wandering eyes may actually be the vacant stare of a thoughtful student. Also, students who have studied together may give similar answers to a question. Consequently, what appears at first to be cheating may not be at all. If cheating is obvious, however, corrective action is indicated; but such a serious charge against a student or students should be made with discretion and only on the basis of substantial evidence.

Your supervisor and other experienced teachers in your department are your most available sources of insight and advice regarding the problem of cheating. Likewise, the Office of Judicial Programs offers two brochures on academic honesty, one for the instructor and one for the student.

Cheating can be very distructive to student morale. It is essential that you make clear to your students the importance of academic honesty and explain what is expected of them regarding the taking of tests, the preparation of original papers, and so forth. Special care also should be taken to guard the security of your tests and examinations.

Non-Native Teaching Assistants

In addition to expertise in their fields, non-native teaching assistants add a valuable international dimension to the University's instructional program. Because of the support provided by their departments, most new non-native teaching assistants adjust to their instructional role without undue

Non-native teaching assistants add a valuable international dimension to the University's instructional program.

difficulties. However, experienced non-native GTAs have indicated several common problem areas that warrant careful attention. These problems and some practical suggestions for dealing with them are discussed below.

Student Expectations

Instructional expectations differ widely from country to country. Formal student-teacher relations may be the norm in some nations, but this relationship is usually not common in the United States. Over the past two decades, a trend toward student-centered curricula, civil rights legislation, and court decisions have fostered an egalitarian ideal among youth in the United States. Informality is an accepted standard in dress, speech, and interpersonal relations; consequently, your students will probably address you with an honorific title such as "Mr.," "Ms.," or "Dr." but will otherwise approach you much as they would another student.

This egalitarian attitude does not indicate disrespect; rather, such a relaxed atmosphere generally indicates acceptance. Conversely, a teacher's reserve and formality in interpersonal relations is often perceived either as an expression of condescension toward students or as a lack of self-confidence. Most UGA students consider themselves to be in an educational partnership with their teachers, and partners in a common enterprise are expected to be open and honest in their dealings with each other.

Teacher Interest

Student learning is the goal for both parties in an educational partnership, so you are justified in expecting your students to do their best in the course. They are justified in expecting you to be sincerely interested in their individual academic problems and progress. If your students realize that you are a friendly, understanding person who is aware of their needs and interests, they will feel much more confident in approaching you for clarification of communication problems. Frequent announcement of your willingness to meet with students during your office hours will reassure them of your accessibility. Likewise, arriving a few minutes early for classes will provide an informal opportunity to get acquainted with students.

Mutual Respect

As the teacher, you are expected to be knowledgeable in the subject, but your students also recognize that you are human. Therefore, if they raise a question you cannot answer, they will respect an honest admission of your lack of knowledge. They still expect an answer, and the answer should be obtained and shared with the class as soon as possible. If such events occur too often, however, more thorough teacher preparation is indicated to maintain student confidence in your mastery of the subject.

Students will also appreciate your being understanding and helpful with regard to their occasional intellectual shortcomings. If they cannot answer a question, they do not like to be humiliated in front of their peers; but neither do they expect you to tolerate flagrant student irresponsibility. Consequently, a

balance of tact and firmness is the key to effective management of most classroom situations.

Generally, most students like to know how well they are doing as the course progresses, and any constructive criticism you may offer a student will usually be accepted as evidence of your interest in his or her personal progress. In most cases, such feedback is best offered on an individual basis rather than in a classroom situation. Such consideration for your students as individuals will greatly enhance their appreciation of you as a person. This sort of acceptance of the teacher is often as important to the learning process as respect for a teacher's expertise.

Academic Standards

College entrance requirements. In the United States, heavy emphasis is placed on social and personal development in the curricula of many secondary schools. Freshman students in this country may not be as well trained in specific disciplines as are students in countries where discipline-centered curricula prevail. In addition, there are no qualifying examinations for entrance into introductory courses at The University of Georgia. Therefore, student abilities generally vary considerably within most classes.

Also, while some nations provide for the routine screening of students to select the most capable as candidates for higher education, a goal in the United States has traditionally been to provide as much formal education as possible for everyone. National testing standards exist for purposes of student guidance and scholarship awards, but there are no national standards for

college entrance. Generally, any person who has a high school diploma or equivalent and who can arrange to pay the tuition can seek a college education at some institution in the United States. Enrollment in a specific college or university depends on the space limitations and independent admissions standards of that institution. At The University of Georgia, the admissions requirements are designed to insure that only those students who have the ability to pursue effectively the educational program of the University are admitted.

Student motivation. In the United States, it is increasingly true that a college education is a routine expectation rather than a unique opportunity. For some, a college degree still represents an opportunity for social and economic advancement; for others, a degree represents merely maintaining established standards. Some of your students will therefore be eager for knowledge and give your course their best; whereas others may enroll in the course only because it is required. Experienced educators recommend teaching to the average ability level of those students who exhibit an interest in the subject.

An international perspective. Most students believe that anything worth learning is useful for understanding the world around them. Therefore, if you can relate the course content to their needs, interests, or opportunities, you can foster learning. Your own cultural background and professional experiences should be a source of information and examples that will add interest to your teaching. Reading the student newspaper will keep you informed on campus events and concerns of interest to your students.

Student Behavior

At times, students reflect a challenging attitude that can be very disconcerting to teachers unaccustomed to informal teacher-student relationships. In this country, persons presenting themselves as authorities, specialists, or experts on a subject are generally expected to be willing and able to stand up to challenge on that subject; therefore, a student's questioning of information usually represents a sincere desire to better understand that information rather than a personal attack on the teacher.

The freedom to challenge authority, which is a product of the egalitarian attitude discussed above, can be an asset to a teacher's effort to help students learn to think for themselves. If an authority, concept, or principle can stand up to challenge, the challenger is generally convinced of its worth. A student's "show-me" attitude actually represents a potent opportunity for learning.

In contrast to student assertiveness, student reserve seldom enhances learning. Although a lack of participation may occasionally represent a lack of student interest, it is more likely a result of uncertainty. Just as you may feel uneasy about facing a class of "American students," some of your students may be equally intimidated by the presence of a "foreign teacher." Consequently, what may initially appear to be disinterest or aloofness may actually be a lack of confidence.

The problem described above may be compounded by the diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds represented in many classes. For a student already experiencing difficulty with the

English language in general, a teacher with an unfamiliar accent may represent a double threat. Learning to recognize and overcome problems such as these early in a course is one of the most important responsibilities you will face as a teacher. Experienced non-native teachers can be an excellent source of ideas for handling such matters. Your departmental supervisor, who has probably encountered similar situations in working with other GTAs, should be an invaluable source of assistance.

Language Differences

By virtue of your appointment to a teaching assistantship, you have satisfied the University's minimum competency requirements in the English language, but you still may experience considerable communication difficulties with your students, especially at the beginning of a course. Students rightfully expect clarity and precision in classroom communications. Whatever the nature of communication difficulties, it is the teacher's responsibility to make the extra effort required to be clearly understood. If for any reason you suspect problems with your competency in English, you should take immediate corrective action. Information about the provisions for participation in the University's American Language Program, which is coordinated by the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, is available through your department and through the Office of Instructional Development.

Whatever your proficiency in spoken English, there are several precautions you may take to insure that your students can understand you in the classroom. First of all, an open discussion

of this issue on the first day of class will prevent student uncertainty and will help to create an atmosphere in which students will feel free to seek clarification whenever it is needed. Using written handouts of assignments, lab instructions, or key points of lectures for the first few days will enable your students receive essential information while becoming accustomed to your teaching. Writing new terms on the chalkboard as you introduce them will make sure that students understand the terms while providing them a chance to hear how you pronounce the words.

It is always good practice to face the class while you speak. Any problems your students have comprehending what you say will be magnified if you attempt to speak and write on the board at the same time. If you wait until you finish writing to elaborate, your students will have a chance to read the information and then listen to you discuss it. Also, the use of questioning techniques or discussion teaching methods will help to make doubly sure that the students clearly understand you.

Careful application of the ideas discussed above should result in the quick resolution of any problems relating to your use of English as a second language. Should problems persist beyond a few days, however, you should seek help. Of all your responsibilities, the clear communication of correct and comprehensive information to your students is paramount.

Handicapped Students

There are on the UGA campus a number of handicapped students with a wide variety of physical disabilities, such as mobility, auditory, visual, or developmental impairments, and

specific learning disabilities which adversely affect a student's ability to process certain kinds of information. As indicated in Chapter One of this handbook, The University of Georgia adheres to a policy of equal educational opportunity for all handicapped students as provided by federal regulations.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities, which are officially listed as a handicap covered by federal regulations, are not always obvious to the teacher. In some cases, students may have learning disabilities of which even they are not aware. The Office of Handicapped Student Services has advised that a learning disability may be suspected when there is a consistently inordinant discrepancy between a student's ability and performance. Additional information concerning the nature of learning disabilities or other handicaps is available from Handicapped Student Services, an affiliate of the University's Division of Student Affairs.

Notification of Special Needs

Whenever possible, you will be given advance notice of a student's special needs by the Registrar's Office and will have time to make appropriate arrangements before the class is scheduled to meet. Otherwise, you will have to assess the situation and initiate the necessary arrangements on the spot. The University's provisions for assisting handicapped students are thorough and effective, and you should generally encounter no problems. However, if undue difficulties are encountered, you

should immediately contact your faculty supervisor and the Handicapped Student Services for advice and assistance.

Handicapped Student Services can provide a student with access to the educational site and can provide some operational assistance in the classroom; but, as with any other student, the handicapped student's ultimate learning success is directly dependent upon effective student-teacher interaction. Despite the best efforts of all concerned, feelings of discomfort or awkwardness toward a handicapped student can cause problems. The following information and suggestions will help to alleviate any concerns you may have.

Effective Student-Teacher Communication

The biggest problems in this area for many teachers are feelings of awkwardness or pity toward handicapped students. These problems generally result from focusing on the disability rather than the person. To overcome the problem, get to know the person, then you can discuss the student's concerns openly on a personal basis and turn your attention to accommodation of person's learning needs. The more quickly you can establish open channels of communication, the better. Once you get to know the student, it is likely that feelings of pity or awkwardness will be replaced by respect and appreciation for the individual's determination and resourcefulness.

Positive recognition and acceptance of a student's handicap are essential first steps to establishing effective student-teacher communications. A disability is a personal matter and should be respected as such, but to ignore the handicap or to

pretend it is not a problem is to ignore the person. Given acceptance and reasonable accommodation, handicapped students can realize their learning potential as well as other students.

Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation indicates flexibility in adjusting the educational environment and instructional methodology to the student's needs. For example, hearing impaired students in lecture classes or audiovisual presentations must be accommodated with an alternate source of information, such as copies of the lecture notes or a transcript of the audiovisual presentation. Blind students will need special arrangements to receive information presented in charts, diagrams, handouts, and displays. Special arrangements will generally be needed in order for students in wheelchairs to participate in field trips. Unique accommodations for testing may also be required.

Many of the accommodations needed by handicapped students are routinely provided by Handicapped Student Services. With

Reasonable accomodation indicates flexibility in adjusting the educational environment and instructional methodology to the student's needs.

sufficient advance notice, other reasonable accommodations can generally be provided through either your department or Handicapped Student Services. Therefore, it is necessary to keep handicapped students informed well in advance of any special events that may affect their class participation. In many cases, the student can take care of the arrangements, but there may also be times when it will be necessary for you as the teacher to assist.

Academic Standards. It is extremely important to recognize that reasonable accommodation does not imply a lowering of academic standards for handicapped students. With reasonable accommodation, handicapped students generally expect to be evaluated by the academic standards of the course. To lower these standards would be demeaning to their personal determination, dignity, and achievement. Such action could also create serious problems of resentment among the other students if they suspect the handicapped student is being given unfair advantages. Likewise, in addition to making the handicapped student feel coddled or otherwise treated as less than a responsible adult, a teacher's overly solicitous attitude will often magnify the feelings of awkwardness among the other students. After reasonable accommodation has been provided, it is in the best interests of the handicapped student and the class in general to extend to that student the same sort of acceptance, respect, and expectations accorded the other class members.

Teaching methods. Because the nature and extent of handicaps may be as diverse as the personalities of the students involved, there is no uniform teaching procedure that can be

prescribed for all situations, even among students with common handicaps. However, with imagination and conscientious attention to your student's needs, you should not have difficulty in establishing an effective learning environment for the total class. A few examples of appropriate teacher accommodations are presented below.

Assure students with mobility impairments of your availability for assistance during your office hours, and make sure your office is accessible. If necessary, arrange for an alternate, more accessible location for office conferences. Also, check to make sure that books on library reserve and other reference materials are located in one accessible location to reduce the transportation difficulties in obtaining the required information. Try to accomplish as much as possible in office visits, and offer to mail or have delivered any follow-up materials. Be certain in the classroom that furniture rearrangements and equipment additions do not create problems.

Many students with auditory disabilities read lips; therefore, face the hearing-impaired student when speaking. If you have a beard, it may partially mask your lip movements. So, be especially careful to speak slowly and distinctly. Also, be sure that the student is located where she or he can clearly see you, the chalkboard, and any other educational equipment.

Clarity of speech is also essential when addressing visually impaired students and students with learning disabilities. When charts and diagrams are presented, they should be explained in sufficient detail to make the important points

obvious. Accompany demonstrations and experiments with a clear, concise narrative description of what is occurring.

Teacher awareness. Finally, remember that all handicaps are not visible, so encourage all of your students to let you know if they have learning disabilities or other handicaps that may need accommodation. For instance, students with lung disorders or allergies might be seriously affected by fumes or dust from laboratory experiments. Also, physical stamina may be a problem for some handicapped people and should be considered when planning extended work sessions and field trips.

As the above examples indicate, many problems for handicapped students can be overcome with simple, common sense accommodations. It is also relevant to consider that, for the most part, the instructional accommodations for handicapped individuals will benefit all students in the class. For instance, if you avoid speaking while writing on the chalkboard, take care to speak distinctly, and face your audience to aid the comprehension of a handicapped person, the rest of the students will also be able to better comprehend what you are saying. Consequently, providing the instructional accommodations needed for handicapped students will frequently result in an improvement of your overall teaching performance.

Student-Teacher Conflicts

Problems between students and faculty are relatively rare in the positive educational environment that prevails at The University of Georgia, but such conflicts do arise. For instance, academic dishonesty may generate disciplinary problems, overly

assertive students may inadvertantly create disruptive classroom situations, or troubled students may become problem students because of their need for counseling. Teaching and learning occur in a dynamic, volatile setting in which the tensions of a moment may create misunderstandings and trigger charges of poor instruction, grading inequities, harassment, or prejudicial treatment. Adherence to established University policies and procedures is essential in trying to prevent problems of this nature and in dealing with them when they do arise.

Avoiding Student-Teacher Problems

Student-teacher problems can generally be classified in two categories: those of an academic nature and those of a disruptive nature. The Office of Judicial Programs, an affiliate of the University's Division of Student Affairs, has advised that many academic problems can be prevented simply by developing a thorough syllabus and sticking to it. In addition to the routine information, such as course content and schedule, required textbooks and outside assignments, the syllabus should contain a

Problems between students and faculty are relatively rare in the positive educational environment that prevails at The University of Georgia.

clear statement of the standards you will impose regarding such matters as attendance, grading, and academic honesty. Your students have a right to know from the start why you feel these matters are important to the quality of their education.

Information and communication. Cheating, plagiarism and disorderly conduct are terms which are not difficult for students to understand; but it is very important that their interpretations of these terms coincide with yours. It is vitally important that your understanding and application of these terms be consistent with established University policies. Information regarding the University's position on student rights and responsibilities is included in The University of Georgia Student Handbook, which is published annually by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Information regarding the University's policy on academic honesty has also been published in easy-to-understand, narrative form in brochures which may be obtained for distribution to students from the Office of Judicial Programs. You are encouraged to obtain copies of these policies and review them with your students at the beginning of each quarter.

Confrontation and resolution. Certain problems, such as a concern over an exam grade or the relevance of an assignment, can often be resolved by discussing the matter with the individual. If a confrontation occurs in a public place, it is generally advisable to attempt to remove the discussion to a more appropriate setting, such as your office. If it appears that you may not be able to resolve the issue in a satisfactory manner or if it seems that the problem may escalate into an inflammatory

matter, you should confer with your supervisor or department head as soon as possible regarding further action.

Resources and action. In the event of more serious problems, it may be necessary to take immediate action of a more direct nature. For instance, in cases of suspected academic dishonesty, you may contact the Office of Judicial Programs for advice or assistance. In cases of suspected drug abuse or emotional disturbance, you may contact the Student Health Services. In the event of violence or illegal activity of any sort, the University Police should be notified immediately. Inform your department head of any such action as soon as possible and immediately record any pertinent factual information for your possible further use.

Planning and prevention. To minimize the possibility of personal liability and to protect the student's rights, avoid any judgmental statements, accusations, or public remarks, written or verbal, regarding a problem to anyone other than officials who have a legitimate need to know. Your faculty supervisor and department head certainly have a legitimate need to be fully informed of such matters. Also, the appropriate University officials have a legitimate need to know of any problem of an illegal, dangerous, disruptive, or contra-educational nature. These agencies employ trained personnel with experience in handling such problems to the best interests of all involved, and their operations function to release the teaching staff to focus upon the primary responsibility of helping students learn.

Consequently, it will be in your best interest to be informed about and immediately handle any serious problems through

appropriate channels. These measures will establish your actions as a matter of record and may open avenues of advice and assistance regarding questions of student rights, teacher responsibility, and/or liability for further actions. Meanwhile, to minimize the possibility of problems, you are encouraged to become fully acquainted with all applicable policies relating to students' rights to privacy, equal opportunity, and so forth.

Accusations of Sexual Harassment or Prejudicial Treatment

These accusations probably rank among the most difficult problems a teacher may encounter. These are certainly serious matters if the charges are warranted, and they also can cause great concern for the teacher who may be falsely accused. As with other problems, it is very important to remember that the University has established policies and procedures for handling inflammatory matters, and the quicker you can get a serious problem into official channels the better. Once a problem is entered into the proper channels, the University's procedures and resources for resolution of the problem will be fully mobilized.

The rarity of such events makes it quite unlikely that you will ever encounter a problem of this nature. You will also be reassured to know that the University has an excellent record for the equitable handling of the problems that have arisen. If you should encounter difficulties, however, remember these suggestions: keep calm and act promptly to move the matter into proper channels, act in good faith at all times, and defend yourself through the established channels. In the meantime, you

will be able to perform your primary function of teaching with the reassurance that The University of Georgia firmly supports the efforts of those who operate responsibly within established policies and procedures.

Order in the Classroom

In the classroom, order is generally the rule when teacher and student are engaged in meaningful learning activities; therefore, teachers who are well prepared, receptive to their students' needs and interests, and confident of the worth and relevance of the subject they teach should have little cause for concern about the classroom atmosphere. Despite the best preparations, however, some class sessions will fail to hold all the students' interest; but this inattentiveness seldom results in serious problems--unless the teacher overreacts to the situation.

Student Inattention

In cases of simple student restlessness or inattentiveness, it may be tempting to try to regain student attention and participation by such methods as admonishing those who are inattentive or reminding them to pay attention since the material will be on the next test. But it is generally better to give the students the benefit of the doubt and give yourself time to look for possible causes of the problem. Perhaps the material you were presenting was too basic or too advanced for the students or maybe you needed to involve the students more or perhaps the class could not see the relevance of the material to the rest of the course. Perhaps you simply forgot that it was the Friday before

Homecoming. Whatever the possible cause, it is important to calmly assess the situation, take whatever remedial action may be indicated, and try for a better class at the next session. Throughout the course, your conscientious attempt to involve your students and to make the material you present interesting, relevant, and comprehensible will greatly increase the probability of a productive classroom atmosphere.

Student Disruption

In the unlikely event that a student should deliberately or inadvertently disrupt the class, it is especially important to deal with the matter in a calm, courteous, and straightforward manner. If the problem resulted from disagreement over the subject matter, it can often be resolved by clarification of the content. If the misunderstanding persists, is irrelevant to the subject matter, or relates to a student's personal concern, it may be better to ask the student to postpone the discussion until after class. Generally, minor classroom disturbances of this nature can be resolved by subsequent discussion; if not, the matter should be handled as indicated in the preceding discussion of student-teacher problems.

It is very unlikely that you will have to deal with unruly student behavior in the university classroom. If you should encounter such misbehavior, however, you should immediately ask the student, in a calm, courteous, firm manner, to refrain from further unruly behavior. If a reasonable effort to restore order fails, it may be necessary to ask the student to leave the class. You should then report the matter to your faculty supervisor for

guidance considering any further action. In the case of persistent unruliness or certainly in the case of actual or threatened violence, you should immediately report the matter to the proper authority and handle it through channels as indicated in the preceding discussion of student-teacher problems.

As McKeachie (1986) points out, problems of classroom morale, order and discipline "...are mainly practical problems of the social psychology of the classroom. For this reason, no single set of recommendations will work for any particular instructor or for any particular classroom situation. What is considered good discipline will vary from instructor to instructor and from one situation to another" (p. 187). Traditionally, an orderly classroom has been perceived as one in which regimented quiet prevails, but this concept of order may be totally inappropriate for a class of adults participating in the excitement of new learning. You are the teacher in your classroom; and it will be up to you to set workable, manageable standards of order appropriate for your classroom situation.

The next chapter is concerned with the responsibilities of including a course.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUDING THE COURSE

This chapter will deal with those functions usually associated with the last week or two of a course, including the final evaluation of student performance, assigning and reporting final grades, closing down the classroom, and evaluating your own teaching performance. As with other facets of teaching, these functions are better performed if considered as integral parts of the total course from the initial phases of course planning.

Evaluating Student Performance

The University of Georgia schedules final examinations and prescribes a uniform grading scale for the assignment of final student grades; but the responsibility for specific policies and procedures for student evaluation generally resides with the school or college, department, and/or individual instructor. In your department, graduate teaching assistants may be assigned varying degrees of responsibility for the preparation, administration, and grading of tests, as well as the determination of final grades. Your responsibilities in these areas should be determined as soon as possible after you receive your assignment.

Measurement and Judgment

Evaluation of student performance entails a dual process of measurement and judgment. Overall accomplishment may be measured by a variety of means including tests, exercises, term

papers, and the final examination. Judgments of student progress may be based on such factors as evidence of improved performance, increasingly meaningful contributions to classroom discussions, and so forth. The class should be clearly informed of all factors that will influence the teacher's final evaluation of student performance. Special consideration should be given to the University's policies and provisions for student privacy in the handling of grades.

Information and references regarding the preparation, administration, and grading of written tests and papers are included in the section on evaluation skills in Chapter Three of this handbook. This information is equally applicable to the use of written tests for final evaluation purposes and should be reviewed in connection with the following discussions of final examinations.

Final Examinations

It is University policy that each student have the opportunity to take a final examination at the completion of a

Student evaluation may be accomplished by a variety of means.

full quarter of instruction. An official examination period for each course is therefore considered to be an integral part of the class schedule. The general dates for final examinations are listed in the Schedule of Classes bulletin for each quarter; and the official final examination schedule, including the specific date and time of examinations for each class period, is announced by or before mid-quarter by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The official exam schedule, which outlines the procedure for resolving scheduling problems, is distributed to the teaching staff at the departmental level and is posted conspicuously for the benefit of students.

Although the University prescribes the exam schedule, the form and content of the final examination is left to the discretion of the teacher. Typically, a written test or written assignment is used for final examinations in introductory undergraduate courses at The University of Georgia; but a number of imaginative, alternative methods of examination have been employed with success. Discussion of testing and grading with your supervisor and other teachers in your department should generate many interesting ideas for developing final examinations.

It is important to let your students know at the beginning of the quarter what form of final examination you plan to use so they can prepare accordingly. For instance, if the exam is to be comprehensive, your students will know that they are responsible for all the material in the course. Conversely, if you decide that the final exam will include only the topics covered since the last test, they will know that you wish them to concentrate

their studies on those topics only. Likewise, if the examination is to be a written objective test, the class will know that you feel it is important that they be able to remember, identify, or recognize essential information. If it is to be an essay, problem solving exam, or oral interview, the students will know that you expect them to have a more general understanding and command of the basic concepts and principles they have learned. The clearer you can make your expectations, the more likely it is that your students will expend their energies in productive study rather than futile cramming for "anything the teacher might throw at them."

Assigning Final Grades

The University of Georgia uses letter grade symbols for recording specific course grades, and corresponding numerical equivalents are used for computing grade point averages. FINAL GRADES SHOULD BE ASSIGNED AND REPORTED BY ALPHABETICAL LETTER ONLY. The alphabetical letter and corresponding numerical equivalent established for levels of student performance are as follows: A=4.0; B=3.0; C=2.0; D=1.0; F=0.0; WF=0.0. Other grade symbols which are not computed in the grade point average include: I, W, S, U, V, and K.

If further information is needed regarding the University's uniform grading policy, you should contact your supervisor, department head, or other designated official in your department.

A review of the diversity of grading strategies that have been successfully employed at the University is beyond the scope

of this handbook; therefore, you are encouraged to review those methods that have been demonstrated to be most successful for experienced teachers in your subject area. Additional general information on grading is included in Chapter Nine, "The ABC's of Grading," in McKeachie's Teaching Tips (1986).

In the final analysis, the strategy you choose should be one that is as fair as possible to the students and best represents their accomplishments. McKeachie also cautions that wisdom decrees consistency in the assigning of final grades: "Whatever your grading strategy, being more generous in assigning grades to tests and papers than in the final distribution of grades guarantees visits from aggrieved students" (p. 116).

Reporting and Posting Grades

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, The University of Georgia's policy provides that personally identifiable information from the education records of a student may not be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of the student, except in the case of University of Georgia officials with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Reporting Grades

University officials responsible for the establishment and/or maintenance of student records are among those who have a legitimate reason to know your students' grades. Therefore, you are required to deliver the final alphabetical letter grades of your students to the Registrar's Office, on forms provided by

that office, prior to the deadline for submitting final grades. Confer with your supervisor and/or department head for complete information regarding policies and procedures for the security and reporting of grades.

You must adhere to the deadline for submission of final grades, and you are personally responsible for delivering your final grade report to the registrar's office in the Academic Building. If that office is closed, the grade report may be deposited in the designated drop-box for grades on the west (Herty Drive) side of the building. The grades drop-box is open day or night until the deadline for submission of grades; after the deadline, the box is locked. If you miss the deadline, your entire class will be assigned "NR" (no record); and you will be required to fill out a grade change form for each student in your class.

Posting Grades

Unless your department has a policy to the contrary and if you have the student's written permission to post his/her grade, you may do so; but the grades must be posted in a manner preventing an individual student's grade to be determined by another student or any other third party. The official grade report form provides a detachable portion, containing the last four digits of each student's Social Security number, which may be used to post grades. Individual grades are part of a student's confidential records and may be released only with the student's written consent; therefore, you should check carefully to see that any posting of grades you may plan is in compliance

with your department's and the University's policies and procedures for the protection of students' rights to privacy.

Grade Changes

Once a grade is reported to the Registrar, it may be changed only by completing the official grade change form. The grade change must be initiated by the instructor of the course, and the grade change form must be signed and approved by the head of the department in which the course was taught. The form must then be forwarded to the dean of the college or school in which the student is registered and finally to the Registrar's Office. Grade change forms may be obtained from your department's office or from the dean's office.

Any grade may be changed by the instructor if it is determined that an error was made in reporting the original grade. An "incomplete" may be changed by the instructor to another grade if the student fulfills the requirements of the course within the required period of time. If an "I" is not changed within the required period of time, it will be changed to the grade "F" by the appropriate official.

Letters of Recommendation

As a teacher, you will be an important influence on the lives of many students, and you may occasionally be called upon to write letters of recommendation to accompany a student's application for a summer job, full-time employment, or graduate school. If you remember the student's performance as commendable, you should have no difficulty with such a request.

However, if it has been some time since you taught the student or if you have any reservations regarding the level of performance, it is generally better to be straightforward about your position. The following suggestions may be helpful if you find yourself in such a situation.

Retaining Records

Save your class records! Although you may get to know your students quite well during a course, your recollection of individual students may become vague several months later. If your records and recall are not sufficient, you will need to set up an appointment to meet with the student. It may be advisable to ask the student to bring a brief resume to give you some insight into her/his goals and subsequent academic activities and achievements.

If you have some reservations about a student's performance, discuss them with the student. If the student appreciates your point of view, you can still write a positive letter of recommendation by citing the student's strong points as well as weaknesses. After all, most employers realize that there are few "perfect performers"; consequently, an honest appraisal may actually carry more weight than a gushing letter of unbridled praise. If you decide not to provide a letter of reference, however, be sure to let the student know.

The Letter of Recommendation

When recommending a student, a standard business letter format on your department's letterhead is generally appropriate, unless other forms are provided. Specific formats and guidelines

for letters of recommendation are sometimes specified by placement agencies and academic admissions offices, so be sure to consult the student about this detail. Be sure to get the full name, title, and address of the person to whom the reference should be addressed; and be sure to get the student's full name with correct spelling. Mistakes in this area can understandably have an negative effect on the reviewer of letters of recommendation.

A one-page letter is usually sufficient to provide the typical information, including the following: your relationship to the student; how long you have known her or him; your comments about the person's skills, performance in your class, and present position or responsibilities; observations regarding the individual's strengths, weaknesses, initiative and motivation; and your recommendation regarding how the above information will qualify the student for the job or course of study under consideration. Also include your title, telephone number, and address in case the employer should wish to contact you for further information, and keep a copy of the letter for your files.

Finally, ask the student to let you know the outcome. Writing letters of recommendation is a time consuming chore, and it can be very rewarding to know that you had an opportunity to help to advance a worthy student in the same way that the recommendations of your former teachers helped you.

Evaluating Teacher Performance

The ultimate criterion for teacher evaluation is student learning, so your evaluation of your students' performance will

also be a measure of your own teaching performance. Other useful forms of evaluation include student ratings, peer reviews, critiques by your supervisor, and videotapes of class sessions. Information of this type is routinely gathered by many departments for use in personnel matters and instructional improvement. At The University of Georgia, specific policies and procedures for all facets of course evaluation are generally determined at the division or department level. Assistance in evaluating teaching effectiveness is also available from the Office of Instructional Development.

Teaching is regarded as an intensely personal matter by most teachers, and many approach the first evaluation of their teaching with trepidation. So do not be surprised if you feel somewhat uncertain about having your teaching effectiveness evaluated. Even the most experienced teachers sometimes feel this uncertainty at evaluation time. Even the most accomplished teachers admit having to fight occasional feelings of defensiveness when negative aspects are mentioned in an evaluation of their teaching. This response is perfectly natural. If you believe you are doing your best, it hurts to discover that you still have shortcomings--until you realize that the knowledge of your shortcomings gives you the insight and opportunity you need to improve.

Learning from Experience

The basis for learning from experience is an awareness that teaching is an acquired skill which deserves the same scrutiny and nurture as any other important work. Probably the

most important steps in learning from experience are a) recognizing the very natural feelings of uncertainty and defensiveness about being evaluated; b) overcoming those feelings long enough to separate yourself from your teaching so you can take a good, objective look at your own strengths and weaknesses; and c) accepting the evaluations of other qualified observers regarding your teaching effectiveness. Self-assessment is a very useful form of evaluation, especially when used in the formative sense for improvement of instruction throughout a course.

Accepting criticism. Accepting the criticisms of others is a major problem for many new teachers. Until this difficulty can be overcome, a teacher will be deprived of much valid help from the observations of those more able to view teacher-student interactions from an objective and experienced perspective. Perhaps the advice that teachers frequently give students is also appropriate for the apprehensive teacher: remember, criticism of your work is not criticism of you as a person. Critical comments are intended to be evaluations of your apparent current proficiency and indications of areas for improvement. Keep this in mind when reading evaluation reports or discussing your performance with your supervisor, and you should find yourself more receptive to constructive suggestions.

Objectivity. Overcoming a tendency toward defensiveness of one's own teaching ability will also enhance one's objectivity when reflecting on his/her own performance. An open awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses may subsequently help a teacher to benefit from the more crucial suggestions for change from the evaluations of those who are uniquely able to assess

teacher performance--the students taught. Once you are receptive to the same sort of scrutiny for your teaching that you give to your students' learning, you are ready and able to learn from your experience as a teacher.

Improvement. Any steps you can take to learn from experience should be very worthwhile, especially if you are anticipating a career in teaching. If your department conducts regular teacher evaluations, you will have a ready-made source of information which may include student evaluations, peer evaluations and/or supervisor review. If this information is unavailable, you may wish to develop and circulate to your students an informal teacher-evaluation form soliciting suggestions for improvement; or, you may request the assistance of the Office of Instructional Development in conducting a more comprehensive evaluation in which your students may express themselves with the assurance of anonymity.

Inviting your supervisor or a favorite professor to observe your teaching and make suggestions for improvement may be very helpful. Having a fellow teaching assistant critique a class session is often very productive. Sitting in on the classes of outstanding teachers or more experienced GTAs in your department will also give you a base of comparison for your own teaching. To see yourself as others see you can sometimes be the most revealing learning experience of all. This self-evaluation can be conducted most effectively by reviewing a videotape of a class session. Many departments which have regular access to videotaping equipment make this evaluation service routinely available to their teaching staff. If your department does not

have this capability, however, you may contact the Office of Instructional Development for information regarding opportunities for videotaping a teaching session.

Precautions. Any evaluation activity in the classroom should be as unobtrusive as possible to minimize the disturbance of the normal student-teacher interaction. Also, any unusual preparation for a monitored teaching session should be avoided; the more normal you can be while being observed or videotaped, the more useful the evaluation will be. Finally, all evaluation plans should have the approval and support of your supervisor. This preparation will prevent the possibility of a duplication of efforts in case your department is already planning to evaluate your teaching.

Improving with Experience

Improving with experience becomes an attainable goal when action is taken to correct the teaching deficiencies revealed by teacher evaluation. For the teacher who is determined to continue developing personally and professionally, the opportunities for improvement are numerous. A simple first step is listing your teaching strengths. These are your foundation for current teaching activities and should be maintained and enhanced with care. Avoid the trap of overcommitment even to your strong points, however, because there is always room for innovation and improvement in teaching.

Next, list the weak points revealed by the evaluation of your teaching and then turn the tables on your evaluators. Ask them for suggestions for overcoming the problems they observed.

Note their suggestions, weigh them against your personal style and your teaching philosophy, and adopt the acceptable suggestions as your initial plan in your struggle against mediocrity. Here, it is just as important to guard against a defensive attitude as it is during any other phase of evaluation. Some of the suggestions for improvement you get from your supervisor, peers, students, or other sources may seem patently ridiculous at first; but try to be as objective as possible when you review them. Otherwise, your initial reactions may cause you to discard without examination some of the better ideas.

As pointed out in Chapter Three, teaching is a highly individualized activity, and any suggestions for change must be considered in this context. There is no "best" teaching style that will work equally well for all teachers, and the most successful teaching styles are those that develop as naturally as possible from a teacher's own personal characteristics. If you are by nature an informal person, a suggestion to "inject more humor" might be very appropriate. If, on the other hand, you are by nature a formal person, an attempt to assume an informal, humorous manner may come across as just that, an assumed posture. In general, it is very important to be your sincere, best self in the classroom. You will have to be the ultimate judge of the acceptability of suggestions for change. Perhaps the best advice is to evaluate input and trust your judgment, but be sure that it is not clouded by a defensive resistance to change.

Periodic re-evaluation of your teaching effectiveness will be needed to measure your improvement as well as to monitor the maintenance of your stronger teaching qualities. Re-evaluation

will probably reveal further opportunities for improvement, but new ideas may also be gleaned from other sources. For instance, observing class sessions of outstanding teachers in related fields may expose you to challenging new teaching techniques. A review of college teaching journals may produce useful information on the problems you are facing. Also, each issue of Teaching at UGA, the OID quarterly newsletter, contains a schedule of Noon Seminars devoted to timely topics related to teaching effectiveness and professional development.

Improving with experience is a continuous process. Success in teaching can be a source of tremendous personal satisfaction and enjoyment, and any steps taken to improve your teaching will likely enhance that sense of satisfaction. Consequently, a successful effort toward improvement will probably motivate several new efforts toward even better teaching performance.

Every effort toward constructive change carries both the potential for success and the risk of failure. For the students'

Improving with experience is a continuous process.

sake, it is very important to assess all teaching goals to maximize the chances for success. However, it is equally important to remember that, if teacher evaluation reveals teaching weaknesses, change is already indicated and failure to seek improvement would be a disservice to your students.

Concern for improvement ranks among the most important attributes of an effective teacher, so do not be timid about seeking improvement. It is expected of you. In the final analysis, your efforts should be rewarding both personally and professionally. But remember, learning is also student-dependent. Even the greatest efforts of a master teacher cannot guarantee success, so it is important to do your best and hope your efforts will motivate your students to do the rest.

Closing Down the Classroom

If you will be teaching the same course in the same room next quarter, "closing down the classroom" will coincide with the responsibility of preparing for the next quarter. If you are graduating or the current quarter is your last quarter as a graduate teaching assistant, however, there are a few things you will need to remember. For instance, you may have stored several valuable reference books or other personal items in convenient drawers, cabinets, or remote corners of the room. Or perhaps you have posted your own maps, charts, tables, or other teaching aids in the classroom. If so, these items should be reclaimed prior to vacating the classroom. Also, if any special furniture or apparatus has been checked out to you for use during the quarter, it should be returned to the proper place and a receipt obtained

so you can verify its return. Otherwise, your records could be "flagged" pending its return.

Other considerations include reporting any damaged or unserviceable furnishings, fixtures, or apparatus that need repair or replacement. If bulk supplies, such as laboratory specimens or chemicals, were used in your teaching, you may be responsible for reporting any supplies that have been depleted. In laboratory and workshop situations, it is also important to be sure that the work areas and equipment are properly cleaned and stored to prevent deterioration, breakage, or loss. (Ideally, the students should take care of this responsibility at the last class session.) Common sense and departmental policy may dictate numerous other last minute functions. Once all these details are complete, you are ready for your final official responsibility: turning in the keys to the classroom, storage cabinets, supply rooms, and so forth. You will have done your job, and your graduate teaching opportunities and activities will have become your teaching experience and, in turn, a major component of your resume.

The final chapter outlines resources for instructional support at The University of Georgia.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

The two major sources of instructional support available at The University of Georgia are the department in which you are employed and the Office of Instructional Development. Through these agencies a wealth of other resources is available to fulfill instructional needs and to provide support. You are encouraged to become familiar as soon as possible with the services that you may use to enliven and enrich your teaching ability and, therefore, your students' learning experiences. You will probably be very impressed with the nature and scope of instructional support which is routinely available to teaching personnel at The University of Georgia. To maximize your awareness of the support available, it is advisable to maintain a cumulative listing of instructional needs as you plan the course you will teach and then review your list with your supervisor to determine the support that is available through the department. The next step is to review your remaining support needs with the appropriate units of the Office of Instructional Development.

The Department

The basic instructional support you will need is supplied routinely by your department. You will be advised, generally during an orientation session or interview with your supervisor, about the department's policies and provisions for secretarial assistance, copying services, and procedures for obtaining any

special equipment, maps, specimens, or other materials you will require. In most departments, budgetary and personnel constraints require that teachers be frugal and plan ahead with regard to supply and support needs. Therefore, be prepared to justify requests for supplies and provide enough lead time for the typing and collation of course schedules, test forms, and other materials; otherwise, the support staff may not be able to have the materials ready when you need them.

Your department may also have access to unique instructional resources which are available on request from other departments in your college or school. Some departments also maintain a liaison with local institutions, agencies, or groups for guest lecturers, field trips, demonstrations, or other educational activities related to the subject you teach. Your supervisor can advise you about the established channels for obtaining any special resources that may be available.

Finally, do not forget your department's greatest instructional resource--its faculty members. Although they have heavy teaching, research, and administrative loads, faculty members also have a vested interest in the quality of your contribution to the instructional program. Quality instruction is the purpose of your department, and it is expected that you will ask for help if you need it. To encourage access to their collective teaching expertise, outstanding departmental teachers conduct formal seminars or courses to train new teaching assistants. Senior faculty, both within your department and in related disciplines,

are also available to serve as mentors to less experienced teachers.

The Office of Instructional Development

The Office of Instructional Development (OID), which reports directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, coordinates campus-wide services for instructional innovation and improvement. This office, which is advised by an Instructional Advisory Committee (IAC) comprised of representatives of each of the University's thirteen schools and colleges, administers the University's Josiah Meigs Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Instructional Improvement Grants program, offers special courses and seminars for faculty and teaching assistants, publishes a quarterly newsletter on instruction, and provides support services through the Instructional Resources Center (IRC). In addition, the Office of Instructional Development offers the quarterly Noon Seminar series for graduate students, faculty, and staff. Topics presented include both instructional enhancement and personal and professional development themes. The office also sponsors the GTA Teaching Awards Program, which recognizes GTAs whose performance in the classroom has been rated as outstanding. The Office of Instructional Development is located in Room 164 of the Psychology Building.

Brief descriptions of the activities of the services of the IRC and OID's special courses for teaching assistants are included below.

The Instructional Resources Center (IRC)

The IRC provides the following media equipment, services, and materials for instructional use: a media library of films, slides, and audio- and videotapes; audio-visual and television equipment for loan; color and black-and-white copy services; audio- and videotape duplication; passport photos and other photographic services; and materials for instruction (including slide-tape presentations, graphic aids, and videotape segments). The IRC also operates a closed circuit television studio and color mobile production unit to provide the University with the capability to record events on campus and develop original programs for classroom use. The IRC is located in the Psychology-Journalism Complex.

Special Course for Teaching Assistants (GSC 777)

The graduate internship for teaching assistants (GSC 777), which is offered for credit in cooperation with the Graduate School, is designed to help prepare GTAs for their instructional responsibilities at The University of Georgia and for future careers involving instruction at other institutions. The course addresses the following topics:

-administrative policies and regulations
-legal responsibilities of instructors
-trends and issues in higher education
-educational planning
-teaching methods
-classroom management
-test construction and student evaluation
-course evaluation
-educational resources at The University of Georgia
-advising and working effectively with students

For additional information concerning GSC 777, contact the Office of Instructional Development, 164 Psychology Building.

University Libraries Instructional Services

Orientation tours, term paper workshops, class instruction on bibliographic research, computerized search services, and other instructional services for students are offered by The University of Georgia Libraries. Faculty members are invited to request instructional services for their classes, and library staff members are willing to work with faculty members to develop a library component for a course and to assist in designing library use assignments. The libraries ask that all requests for instructional services be made at least a week in advance to allow time for scheduling and preparation. For further information, contact the Coordinator of Bibliographic Instruction at the Main Library or the Science Library.

The most exciting part of teaching is that you will continue to learn more about your subject, your students, and yourself.

A Final Note From the OID

By now you probably have read more about teaching than you can digest. You even may feel overwhelmed. It is important to remember at this juncture that, despite all of the complicated aspects associated with teaching, common sense and intuition are still the best guideposts. Communicating to students what you expect, using appropriate instructional methods, constructing valid evaluation measures, and treating students with kindness and respect will always pay great dividends; yet you are the one who brings these factors together in a unique, effective way.

Teaching is potentially one of the most rewarding activities in which you will ever engage. Having an opportunity to share with others your subject matter speciality is exciting in itself; however, many other joys come with teaching. Meeting new young people and being able to contribute to their success is equally rewarding. Perhaps the most exciting part of teaching is that you will continue to learn more about your subject, your students, and yourself.

Perhaps the most important consideration associated with teaching is to keep it exciting. This can be done by getting to know your students, trying new and innovative teaching methods, and attempting to help students become as actively involved in learning as possible. Mark Twain once said that the person walking down the street carrying a cat by the tail is having forty times the experience than is the person observing from the sidewalk. Maintaining enthusiasm and helping students become active learners is the essence of effective teaching. We trust

that this manual will be of assistance to you as you carry out your instructional responsibilities at The University of Georgia and in your future teaching or other professional career.

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